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TRAVELS ON HORSEBACK

IN

MANTCHU TARTARY:

BEING

A SUMMER'S RIDE BEYOND THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.

88635

BY

GEORGE FLEMING, Esq.

With a Map and numerous Illustrations.

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LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1863.

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A VIEW BEYOND THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.

London: Hurst & Blackett

TO

A. MICHIE, ESQ.

OF SHANGHAI,

THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED IN KINDLY

REMEMBRANCE OF HIS PLEASANT AND VALUABLE COMPANIONSHIP DURING

A LONG RIDE IN A DISTANT REGION.

Comes jucundus in via pro vehiculo est.

PREFACE.

PARTLY to while away the tedium and monotony of a long sea voyage from China to England, and partly to redeem a promise made before leaving that country, the following narrative of a somewhat novel ride through one of the most distant regions of the great Chinese empire was written for publication.

Much as its southern portion has been explored and described, little in reality is known regarding the far north, more especially of those hitherto inaccessible districts which border on, or lie beyond, that marvellous monument of human industry—the Great Wall, in its course along the eastern margin of Old China.

It is therefore hoped that an attempt to describe the general features of the country, and the special characteristics of the northern Chinese—differing as they do very widely from their brethren of the south—together with the incidents inseparable from the wanderings of two adventurous Britons travelling in their proper costume, for nearly seven hundred miles, among a people to whom the

existence of such a place as Great Britain was unknown—may prove in some degree interesting. It may be a long time before Europeans will again venture so far as from the vicinity of Peking to the birthplace of the Mantchu dynasty, and journey unscathed through the fair provinces that exist between the two capitals, inhabited by thousands of an industrious race, to whom rebellion and its attendant horrors are unknown. So, until a more leisurely survey can be made of this extensive tract by those who care to travel such a distance, and do not object to very unpleasant fare and very bad accommodation—for the country is not quite adapted to the thousand and one desires of dilettante tourists—these notes of a holiday pilgrimage the author hopes will not be unacceptable to the general reader.

WOOLWICH: *May* 1863.

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TRAVELS ON HORSEBACK

IN

MANTCHU TARTARY.

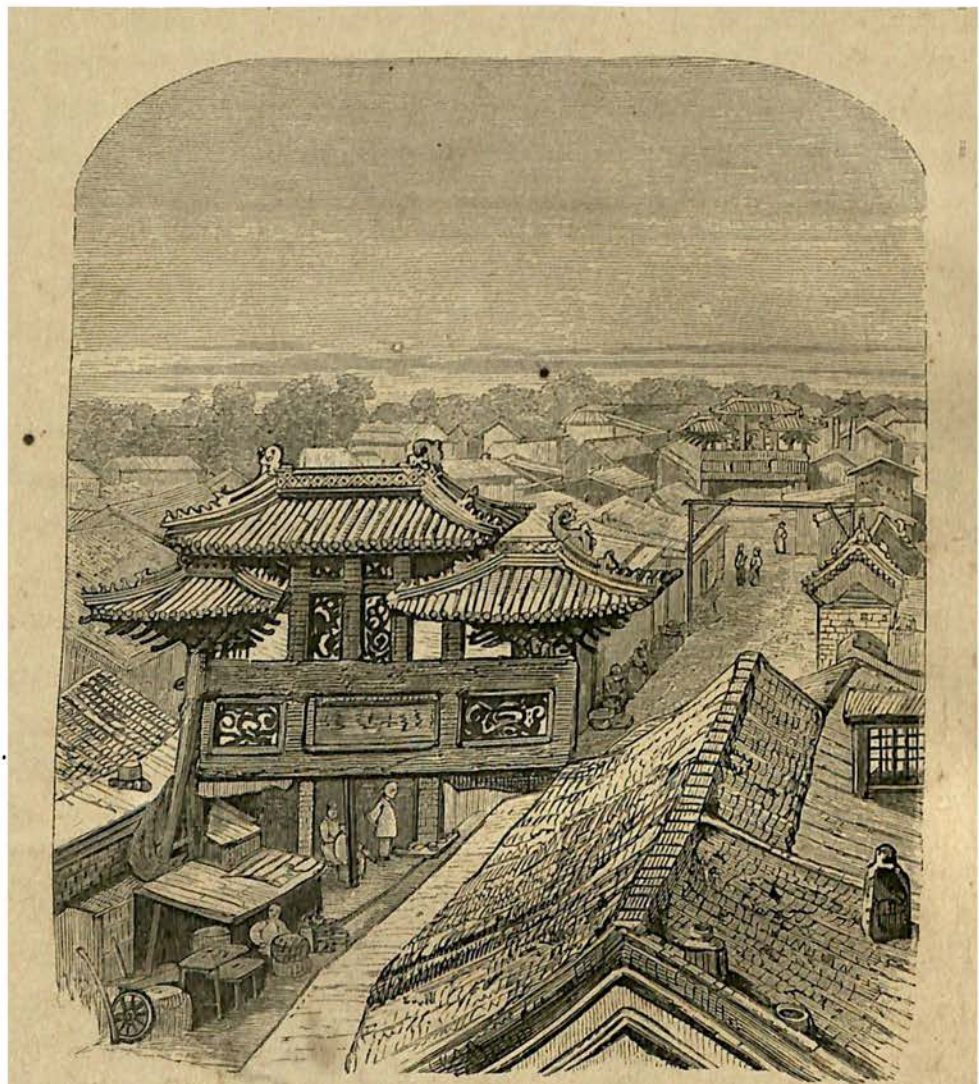
CHAPTER I.

SUMMER AT TIEN-TSIN — EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE IN NORTH CHINA — ASK LEAVE TO TRAVEL IN THE COUNTRY — DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING PERMISSION — OUR PASSPORTS — OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL — OUR TRAVELLING EQUIPMENT AND 'MOUNT' — DISLIKE OF CHINESE INTERPRETERS TO TRAVEL, AND OUR JUVENILE BARGAIN.

THE month of July, 1861, was ushered into the distant supreme province of the Middle Kingdom, as delightful old Spenser has it, 'boiling like to fire,' and with such an unexpected fierceness and ardent intensity as took everyone of the foreign community, civil and military, located within or without the walls of the city of Tien-tsin, by surprise. It altogether banished from their minds the favourable opinions they had been forming as to the salubrity of the climate of North China, as well as smothered the grateful expressions they were about to pour forth, at their good fortune in being permitted to spend a whole summer in the country, and miss the sickly effects of a season always justly dreaded by Europeans in the southern portions of the empire.

It seemed but yesterday since we were shivering and freezing in the glacial temperature of an almost arctic winter,

with sharp-cutting winds sweeping everything animated into sheltered nooks and recesses, and whirling dust and earth high up in the air, until the daylight was nearly eclipsed by a canopy of opaque clouds of as muddy a tinge and repulsive an appearance as the turbid waters of the Peiho;



A Street in Tien-tsin.

while we, muffled in every available shred of woollen stuff, closely enveloped in furs and sheepskins, and with ears and noses carefully guarded from the 'wind's keen tooth,' by curious appliances attached to gigantic head-covers of cotton-quilted pelage, huddled around the feeble fire of mess or

sleeping room, through which the breeze sported in the most wanton and malignant spirit. It seemed, as I have said, but yesterday since we were striving to maintain vitality, and keep noses, ears, and toes safe from the frigid regions of a Spitzbergen winter; yet here we were, with unknown, and therefore unguarded, violence, projected into the warmest corner of the torrid zone—transported, as if by the influence of some malevolent genii, from the inhospitable regions of Greenland to the unwelcome plains of Hindostan. Truly this is a climate of excess, of rapid transitions from heat to cold, of dust-storm and cloudless sky, relentless cold and unmitigable heat; and its effects require no small amount of elasticity of constitution, physical tenacity, and mental rigidity, to successfully encounter such strange treatment.

The universal cry, or rather plaintive vapid murmur, sounded feebly from every tongue, 'Oh, isn't it hot!' 'What blazing weather!' 'Never felt it so dreadfully warm in India!' 'I wish we had the winter again!' with other interjections, interrogations, and complaints, as pithy and laconic as strength or resolution would allow. And there could be no difference of opinion about it, for the weather was disagreeably hot. No matter whether the thermometer, suspended in the shade of a brick wall with a northern aspect, and screened under a roofing of mats, indicated 108° or 110° at the General Hospital, or, in the deepest shade of a field-officer's bedroom, only gave 96° or 98°, everybody seemed to be satisfied that he had arrived at as near a condition of igneous fusion as it was possible for mortality to bear without succumbing, or passing entirely into the liquid or gaseous forms assumed by bodies exposed to a sufficiently high temperature; and if the thermometers chose to differ by a few degrees, no one would have the energy or desire left to discuss the propriety or necessity of exposing the mercury in the light shade out of doors, or of burying it in the depths of a room, a cellar, or a well. At rest or in motion,

in the perpendicular position, or in a state of horizontal collapse, the perspiration seethed, trickled, eddied, and saturated, until calico, flannel, and kirkee were wringing wet; until handkerchiefs and towels had absorbed twice their own weight of fluid. Complete prostration, we thought, was almost inevitable to the flaccid, enfeebled British soldier, forced to swelter away the fiery months of a Chinese summer in the low-roofed, hampered, and jammed-together dwellings of a filthy town. Friends and comrades one met with in the constricted streets, looked like sponges imbibing ceaselessly large quantities of fluid, and as expeditiously filtering it through the countless pores that were covered with a torturing scarlet eruption, inadequately designated 'prickly heat.'

The only winds moving over the city, and now and again penetrating to our pent-up courtyards, had the suffocating qualities of the African simoom, combined with the parching tendencies of the Syrian sirocco. Nothing could escape the perpendicular radiation of the sun, whose fiery gleams darted through roof, screen, and shades of reed-mat raised high over court and housetop; and in the streets, like lightning, it pierced through helmet of pith and head-piece of covered basket-work, striking in upon the brain until it induced either vertigo, fever, or deadly sun-stroke.

The solar rays might have been concentrated to the burning focus just over our heads, so scorching were they, and at times they felt so unbearable that the enervating breath of the Harmattan seemed to be fanning them into active flame. Terrestrial radiation during the night was either altogether in abeyance, or at best but feebly and almost imperceptibly maintained in the few long hours intervening between the rising and setting of the sun; for the baked earth around and underneath us seemed to have become so thoroughly surfeited by the great amount of heat upon its surface, as to have lost the power of cooling down again when the sun

had left it; so that by night, as well as by day, the atmosphere felt as if it were under the ascendency of some intense subterranean combustion that threatened to burn up everything above ground. Yet at night the grateful fires blazed and crackled, and doors were carefully closed to exclude the bitter night-wind.

A rattling blast of cold air would, in that month of July, have proved more refreshing to our overheated bodies, than a draught of icy water to the traveller in the Great Sahara, and the clear, bracing chilliness of a frosty night in England, if granted to us but for a few minutes, would have been equally welcome. How often did the winter, with its nipping but healthy cold, rise pleasantly before us when some of us threw ourselves on our beds in a state of fever, while others recklessly wore icy applications to their heads, or sat for nights in tubs of cold water; and in those rooms which day by day appeared to be contracting in size, like the iron-chamber of the Inquisition, how often did we not strive to recall the story of the gallant Captain Somebody, of the ——th, who, if we can remember aright, in passing through Charing Cross — for we have a Charing Cross at Tien-tsin, but, alas! how unlike the original! — met a soldier of his regiment with a rather suspicious-looking bag carried on his back. 'Where are you going with that bag?' demanded the captain.

'To the barracks, sir,' replied the man.

'What have you got in it?'

'Porter, sir.'

'What! porter in a sack! Oh, nonsense! let me see.'

'Very well, sir;' and the bag is heavily, and with no cheerful grace, dropped on the frozen ground, and slowly opened, when a huge wedge of coffee-coloured stuff, having the peculiar crystalline fracture of ice, is laboriously extracted from the depth of the sack and exhibited to the perplexed gaze and astonishment of the wondering officer. 'It's the ration porter, sir,' the exhibitor chuckles, as he

shifts the heat-abstracting mass from hand to hand to prevent his fingers being frost-bitten—'It's the ration porter, sir, only it's freezed.'

From an early hour in the morning until late in the evening, there was no moving out of doors unless on some very urgent business, when the shadiest side of each street, house, or wall, was eagerly sought for and clung to, by the European, as he looked with horror on the infatuated Chinese who perambulated the streets and went about their every-day occupations in the full glare of the midday sun, with the apparently most reckless disregard of consequences.

On one of the earliest days of that month, when fur busbys were exchanged for iced night-caps, and immersion in cold water for hours together preferred to heavy winter clothing, I forwarded an application for leave of absence, that I might wander into some of those curious nooks and corners which must, it was predicted, exist somewhere between Tien-tsin and Moukden—the birth-place and nursery of the Mantchu dynasty—the distant capital of Mantchu Tartary—and make a hurried survey of an almost unknown region, for the satisfaction of a desire that had long haunted me to learn whether the terms of the Treaty of Tien-tsin, in so far as they related to British subjects travelling in China, were understood or known in the numerous towns and villages supposed to intervene between the Peiho and the heart of the Mantchu country; and also to prove whether Europeans, divested of Jesuitical artifice and Chinese costume, could ride along their roads, refresh themselves during the day in their halting-places, and sleep securely amongst them in the night.

In the more favourable spring months application had been made on several occasions for a passport and permission to revisit Peking, and to extend my journey to the mountains beyond, and even to Inner Mongolia, did time and opportunity favour such a project, but unfortunately with no success.

Indeed, with little prospect of any, for the City of the Plain had become once more a sealed city, the country on the other side of it forbidden ground; and that article of the Treaty which stipulates that 'British subjects are to be allowed to travel for their pleasure, or for purposes of trade, to all parts of the interior,' was, for the time, set aside in the direction of Peking, especial care apparently being taken for the exclusion of those annoying intruders from beyond the seas who would persist in seeking to explore the ruinous streets and buildings, and filthy purlieus of the far-off, vast, curious city of Kambalu.

All hopes of passing from the known to the unknown, the explored to the unexplored, in that quarter were abandoned, and I was obliged to surrender myself, very unwillingly, to the baking and stifling atmosphere engendered in stench, effervescing ditches, and filth-garnished streets, until, luckily, a Shanghai gentleman, accustomed to Sinensian travel in the South, arrived at Tien-tsin, fully bent on increasing his knowledge, and, perhaps, trade relations with the dwellers beyond the Great Wall.

No sooner were his plans and projects made known to me than the scarcely subdued feeling of inquisitiveness was again roused, and another desperate attempt was resolved upon to obtain leave, for the purpose of accompanying Mr. M—— through all the prospective risks, adventures, and obstacles incidental to such trips, regardless of the warnings thrown out about the danger of travelling in a country, the inhabitants of which had scarcely yet returned to their homes from the fields where they had met and been defeated by our troops. They were generally acknowledged to be the most formidable of all the tribes who muster under the Imperial standard. The insufferable temperature gave other friends a rather good reason for plying me with serious advice and earnest solicitations to await the approach of the autumn, when the weather might prove more auspicious, and less

danger might be apprehended should we be compelled to journey in the middle of the day. But I had sternly resolved to make the venture, and, greatly to my delight, my leave was at once granted, without a reference to Peking:—in which case it was, indeed, very questionable whether the tour would have been looked upon with favourable eyes. Major-General Stavely, who commanded the garrison, was fully impressed with the good results which would accrue to everyone concerned in our relations with China, were we allowed, without scruple, freely to traverse the country in every direction in accordance with the terms contained in the ninth article of the Treaty.

We had only to wait for the authorised form of passport from the consul before we were ready to start. This was procured in two or three days—the shortest space of time in which the pettifogging, scribbling Chinese officials could copy out all the particulars from the English paper, then note those puzzling names of ours, besides inserting numbers of their hieroglyphics in vacant lines on the Chinese portion of the document, and affixing what was said to be a seal, but which, in our eyes, bore more resemblance to a blotch of red-lead and oil.

The English part of the document was singularly brief, and, as it was somewhat of a novelty in its way, we were particularly careful to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with it.

Passport No. ——

'British Consulate, Tien-tsin:
July 3, 1861.

'The undersigned, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Tien-tsin, requests the civil and military authorities of the Emperor of China, in conformity with the ninth article of the Treaty of Tien-tsin, to allow Mr. ——, a British subject, to travel freely, and without hindrance or molestation, in the

Chinese empire, and to give him protection and aid in case of necessity.

'Mr. ——, being a person of known respectability, is desirous of proceeding to Newchwang, and this passport is given him on condition of his not visiting the cities or towns occupied by the insurgents'—Signed by the Consul. A note was appended on the other side, intimating 'that all passports must be countersigned by the Chinese authorities at the place of delivery, and must be produced for examination on the demand of the authorities of any locality visited by the bearer. British subjects travelling in China without a passport, or committing any offence, were there said to be liable to be arrested and handed over to the nearest consul for punishment,' which ominous threat was followed by 'FEE ONE DOLLAR,' a sum that was not, as I at first unkindly imagined, to be applied to any other purpose than that of rewarding justice, should the infliction of the menaced pains and penalties be awarded on conviction, but simply as a means of defraying the expenses attendant on the issue of these evidences of our good character and peaceable intentions.

Through the kind offices of a friend in the Chinese Customs, a more ostentatious authority was procured for our service from the Imperial Commissioner at Tien-tsin, an article got up quite after the time-worshipped fashions of our co-citizens of the Central Kingdom. It was mysterious and verbose enough for the most fastidious of Chinese scholars, inscribed in a running sort of hand, and confined within certain limits by a kind of magic square of blue ink, elaborately festooned with crooked dragons and flowers, and each of the corners defended by one of those terror-inspiring monsters—a wonderful sort of hybrid, something between a striped French poodle and a rabid hippopotamus—which are met with everywhere delineated in stone, wood, or metal, and which seem to be the

appointed tutelary mastiffs for guarding all manner of things, especially those appertaining to the Government.

The words were written on a large sheet of the most delicate cobwebby paper that could be made, and it required no small degree of patience and careful manipulation to unfold it and examine its contents without reducing it to shreds.

'Chung,' it said, 'Imperial Commissioner and Superintendent of Trade for the three Northern ports, issues a passport to the two Englishmen F. and M. (names twisted about in a startling and almost incomprehensible manner to suit their pronunciation), who propose travelling from Tientsin to Newchwang, lest they should meet with any obstructions on their way. Therefore, on their presenting this pass, or order, at places on the route, the local Mandarins are to aid them and facilitate all matters connected with their journey.' 'A pass issued to the two Englishmen, F. and M.,' was subjected to an almost endless number of repetitions, and the date, 'the Eleventh year of the Emperor Hien-fung, fifth month, and twenty-seventh day,' concluded the strange document, which was tattooed in circles and other figures in red ink at those places where particular attention was called to certain words or sentences of unusual import.

We thought ourselves fortunate in being favoured with this mark of the Imperial Commissioner's desire to lend his aid to strangers travelling through his suspiciously-guarded country, and though we did not then deem the paper of much importance, seeing we had already a more potent instrument, yet we surmised that it might prove of value at some time or other on the way.

It was decided that, in spite of the hot unfavourable weather, we should travel the whole distance on the backs of Tartar ponies, as riding was not only more favourable for exploring, sight-seeing, and speed, but much more compa-

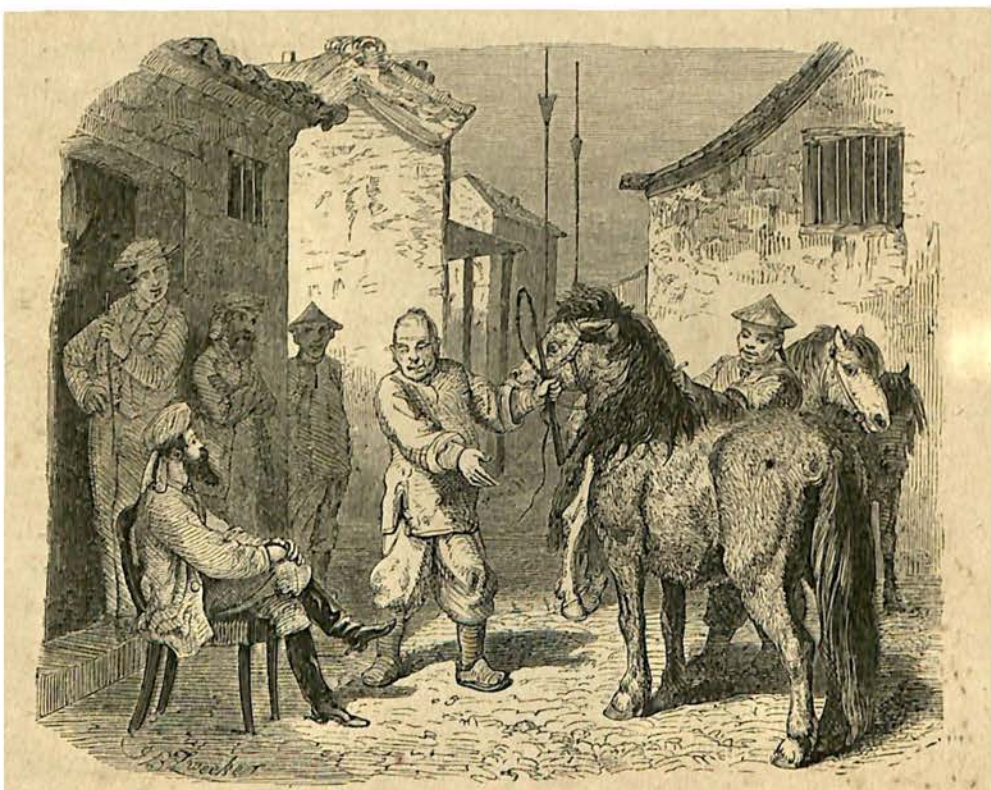
tible with sound limbs and intact spines than confinement in the narrow, springless, wooden-axle-treed boxes of native carts, that were dragged ruthlessly through and over all sorts of paths and roads.

A single cart was, nevertheless, necessary to carry the small stock of provisions we considered it advisable to have with us in case of need, as we knew nothing of the nature and resources of the country beyond twenty miles to the north-east of Tien-tsin, and were unwilling to trust too much, at first, to the hospitality of the people we ventured amongst. As M—— had providently brought with him, from Shanghai, a tolerable supply of rounds of canister containing the essences and quintessences of everything nutritious to be found at home, and had also speculated largely in rice as a stand-by when everything else should fail, we could not begrudge the delay that might attend the progress of such a vehicle, the more especially as it also carried the very slender stock of clothing and bedding that could not be dispensed with, unless we were indeed very hard pressed.

I purchased a rough, raw-boned tyke of a Tartar pony—whose body was a series of salient angles and ridges, with unsightly, and by no means symmetrical, protuberances in the most conspicuous places—from a roguish Chinese horse-dealer who had all the vices and dodges of his Western confrères, without a single redeeming quality, except that of showing off his stud in a manner that would do infinite credit to a more enlightened and conscientious trafficker in the equine species; telling at the same time as many falsehoods about the age and good traits of his various beasts as would have ruined the reputation of the most depraved screw-dealer in London.

Although our purchase looked the most unpromising to the eye of a casual observer, and was the cheapest of the lot brought for our inspection, the rascally vendor demanded forty dollars. We gave twenty. There was a confident look

of 'fair and easy goes far in a day' about the animal, a sort of stubborn, never-knock-up expression not only in its dejected physiognomy, but in its shaggy legs, rotund abdomen, and unkempt mane and tail; and I felt so satisfied that he would not deceive my expectations as to his endurance, that I not only did not trouble myself about investing in a supernumerary animal for an emergency, but even declined giving



A Chinese Horse-dealer.

this one a trial until the very day on which we were actually mounted to proceed on our road.

Everything was speedily arranged, with the exception of one important matter, the engagement of an interpreter; and this was discovered to be the most embarrassing business of all. M——'s servant, a Shanghai or Cantonese boy, knew but little of the dialect of North China, and at best bore but a sorry character as a useful assistant; so it was deemed

expedient to dispense with his services altogether, and engage one of the Canton people who were arriving daily, almost, at Tien-tsin. They can talk and understand the local *patois*, and are generally ready, for a high rate of wages, to lend themselves to the foreigners whom they have followed from the South. But an overland trip to the opposite side of the Gulf of Pecheli had no attractions for them. They probably saw nothing in it but starvation and discomfort, and perhaps a strong chance of decapitation, should we be so unfortunate as to draw down upon us the vengeance or ill-will of the people beyond the wall. After searching amongst these adventurous exotics, and enduring a good share of foul odour in the lowly localities in which they stow themselves, we could only find one boy who showed any desire to treat with us, and even he would accept nothing less than thirty dollars a month. To this exorbitant sum we were obliged to assent as the only means of getting out of our difficulty. After concluding the bargain, he shrewdly turned up his childish face, and gave us a cunning leer from underneath his angular eyelids, with the air of a veteran diplomatist, enquiring, 'What pigeon* you wanchee make so long way?' He was informed that we wanted to make 'the look see pigeon.' His countenance dropped at once, for he knew such business is always hazardous with such a jealous people. We had then every reason to doubt his good faith and intention to adhere to the agreement, and placed no great reliance on his appearing at the rendezvous by the appointed hour next day, when we had determined on commencing our trip.

* *Pigeon* is the current word for business, and *Wanchee* to seek or desire.

CHAPTER II.

FUGITIVE SINOLOGUES — 'HAVE WHILO'— START WITHOUT INTERPRETERS — OUR CHINESE GROOM — THE 'HEAVENLY FORD'— ITS STREETS, SHOPS, AND PEOPLE — THE PEIHO — A MELTING SENTRY — THE OPEN PLAIN — OUR FIRST ATTEMPT AT THE FLOWERY LANGUAGE — 'PIGEON ENGLISH' — SIGHT OF THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS — THE VILLAGE OF TE-TAU AND ITS INN — A RESTLESS NIGHT AND A MOSQUITO ENTERTAINMENT.

BY midday of the 6th we were ready to leave Tien-tsin, and having collected all our travelling equipment at a merchant's house in the main street, and stowed it carefully away into the cart, with our ponies ready to be mounted, we only awaited the somewhat doubtful arrival of the Canton interpreter. But hour after hour passed away, and still he made no appearance, neither could his whereabouts be discovered, until it was sufficiently obvious that he had shirked the task, broken the contract, and hid himself; so, chagrined at having delayed so long on his account, we adopted the only course left open, which was to take M——'s servant, who, though he might be no scholar and could scarcely make himself understood, would prove better than no interpreter at all. Accordingly, the youth was sent for; a suspicious interval of time elapsed, and after spending another impatient period, an old comprador of the house, a Chinese of business habits, but slow speech, approached us in deliberate strides, and, with an expression of countenance worthy of faithful old Caleb Balderston when he communicated the woful destruction of the dinner to the Laird of Ravenswood, announced that 'that pieccy boy have whilo,'* and he couldn't

*Whilo, to run away.

'savey' where he had gone. Diligent search was made, but in vain, for the artful vagabond had removed his goods and chattels to some other establishment, given his master a Gallic good-bye, and sallied out to travel on his own account. This was mortifying in the extreme, and we saw no chance of finding a substitute for these slippery elves. But whatever might betide we were obliged to start; indeed, such trifling impediments to our advance only made us the more determined to leave at once, and before other and perhaps more serious mishaps should deter us from proceeding altogether.

My hopes of success were now firmly concentrated on M——, who certainly had the advantage of a long residence and much travelling in China to initiate him into the mysterious rudiments of the *Hwa Yen* or flowery language, though he modestly confessed that he had but little faith in his abilities that way, and expressed misgivings as to his slight experience in it being of any service whatever. As for myself, I only knew a few of the simplest words of the common form of speech used in the country, picked up casually in a year's buffeting about; so I did not consider myself even competent to assist my companion in the labour which now devolved upon him. It was, therefore, with somewhat gloomy forebodings of being unable to acquire information on the road, and with a dubious termination to the little expedition looming before us, that we got under way.

Our suite, in addition to the carter, comprised only one individual—an atomy of a Peking groom, who was, besides, a rigid Roman Catholic, and therefore entitled to a greater share of confidence and trust than one of the common unconverted. M—— had mounted him on a gaunt great pony, the better to enable him to lead another, which was reserved for a break-down, and the little man thought it but right that he should make as much of the occasion as possible, so

he had got himself up in his best—as we surmised his only —suit of blue cotton; the bottoms of his wide pantaloons were neatly tucked into the legs of snow-white socks at the ankle, gaiter fashion, and his feet were encased in carefully-mended shoes, while his little scraggy head was roofed by a short conical hat of cane, with a luxuriant tassel of red silk depending from the apex, and fringing his face, ears, and tail. Sitting bolt upright in his high-peaked saddle, his feet entering no further than the ball of the big toe into those ponderous stirrup-irons with dragons' heads peering out from each side, and wearing yet the gilding of other days, Ma-foo, as he was soon christened, from his occupation as horse-keeper, looked not at all amiss, and doubtless felt all he looked.

The muleteer having declared, positively, that he was perfectly acquainted with the road between Tien-tsin and Newchwang, we began to gather assurances of luck, and had not proceeded far before misgivings had given place to feelings of gladness in the prospect of leaving such a disagreeable place, if only for a day. Even before we had been many minutes in the saddle we commenced diverting our minds to other subjects; among them we considered, with a freedom of thought which we dared not to have assumed on ordinary days, why the Chinese, with a perversity of purpose and inconsistency of expression unknown to any other branch of the human family, should designate such a Babel as this Tien-tsin—such an agglomeration of everything unnaturally fantastic and nasty by such a pompously sweet-sounding name as that of the 'Heavenly Spot,' or 'Heavenly Ford,' for it seems there is a difference of opinion amongst those most learned in their grotesque calligraphy as to the interpretation of the characters that compose the title—not that it matters much which of the two may be finally decided upon as the correct one, for the place by either name, or by any other that the most devoted Son of Han can confer upon it, will smell as sweetly to Chinese noses, and as revoltingly

vile to those of Britons. It bears nothing either within or around it to give the most liberal-minded traveller the faintest shadow of an excuse for giving it any other character than that of a fusty accumulation of low dwellings and unclean human beings shut in from all sanitary measures, and perpetually enveloped in an insalubrious atmosphere of unpleasant odours. It is, in truth, the most uncelestial spot that any rigid materialist could visit.

Here we were moving along sinuous streets, like no other streets of China, for the largest amount of traffic compressed into the smallest possible space, our ears assailed by the stunning din of noisy confabulators and stormy rival traders who reiterate their numerous cries in the loudest roars they can fabricate into words bristling with harsh guttural aspirations. On each side, from the old clothes shops, came a clanging sing-song chorus from boisterous salesmen who turn out and toss over their soiled and faded frippery as they bawl to the passers-by an invitation to purchase *such* a handsome *magwa*,* which will be sold for next to nothing, and there is a pair of inexpressibles to match, fit for a Mandarin. Now we are stopped by a busy throng of pedestrians, each bent on business, but who are immediately sent flying by a gang of shouting, slanging coolies, who completely sweep the narrow thoroughfare with their ponderous loads, dissipate crowds as if by magic, and cram the unfortunate individuals into every nook and cranny they can squeeze in, in their irresistible progress to some European hong. Again, we obtain an undesirable post on the margin of a copious cloud of savoury steam issuing from a collection of bubbling cauldrons and hissing stew-pans, while endeavouring to steal out of the intolerable sun to ensconce ourselves under the shadowy recess of a huge square-topped cotton umbrella and the adjoining wall. We are instantly

* Jacket.

and vigorously attacked by a mob of beggars—and such beggars! who seize the welcome opportunity of leaving the cooking operations, which they had been watching with the saliva-excited intentness of starving men, to besiege us with their horribly dolesome iterations of 'Chow-chow-a,' the general word for food, adding, when our hand is slow in moving towards the pocket, 'Shi-lung, shi-lung, cash;' it is cold, it is cold; money! This fallacy is usually rewarded by a trifle, for they who employ it know full well that the remembrance of a mendicant's gelid existence during a North China winter ought to reach the heart of any human being who has witnessed his sufferings, sooner than any hot-weather expressions they might insert among their numerous importunities.

Once more we thread our narrow course, but have not measured many yards when the cart-wheel upsets two wooden buckets of indescribable slops which evolve the most abominably fœtid gases possible to conceive. Before we have time to pull up, the contents of an apple-stall are mingled with the diabolical *débris*, to the confusion of the owner, who, however, saves us any further annoyance by viewing the accident merely as an accident, and consoles himself with a philosophical equanimity worthy of admiration, while he sets about repairing the misfortune as best he may. The tradesmen and stall-keepers show but little sympathy, and the fowl-sellers lose no time in plying us hard with their feathered commodities, which they thrust under our very eyes, persisting in designating their goods as 'fish,' asking us to make an offer to their demand of 'My much,' as they are pleased to interpret 'how much?' in their buying and selling transactions.

We have passed through the market-place, through that unique nest of tumult and ill-flavoured goods styled Charing Cross, and with some difficulty have managed to shave the edge of the narrow earthen pavement that lies before the

shop of the enterprising confectioner and pastrycook for whom some obliging customer has, with an eye to a world-famed and a long-established reputation, borrowed the unimpeachable name of Gunter, and emblazoned it on a respectable square of dingy pasteboard, with various other notifications in English of an accommodating nature. The small space before the counter is, as it always happens to be, crowded to excess, and the nimble servants behind the high partition are naked to the waist, as all shopmen are in sudoriferous weather, busily dispensing the most enticing and agreeable of comfits and irresistible morsels of pastry to all classes of the community. 'How do, come in, tak' cup tea—sponge-cak,' our old friend calls out, with his customary good-natured smile, and then repeats the invitation in French to make certain that we understand him, or to show that he can address himself, with ease, in either of the languages, for he is studying them both with very laudable industry, and making wonderful progress too.

We decline the proffered bait, which would subject us to an hour's catechising by this erudite student of the allied tongues, and in a few minutes more of crushing and halting are at the termination of that long, narrow, devious suburban lane which constitutes the Regent Street, the Mall, the Charing Cross, the Fleet Street, and the Billingsgate of Tien-tsin, but which looks like nothing we ever saw in the shape of a street or thoroughfare; it seems more like an unwilling compromise between a Stamboul bazaar, a decayed and wasted Holywell Street of many years ago, and an alley in an English country-town during fair time, than any other locality of which we have any experience.

Turning sharply to the left, we are within a hundred yards of the bridge of boats across the Peiho, for which we steer, but intercept the march of a squad of naked urchins, armed with sticks and reeds got up as imitative firelocks, who, with mock alacrity and steadiness, form up, as best

they can, to give us a military compliment, after the manner of their invaders. Their pompous ragamuffin of a leader halloos, in no very despicable fashion, as one of us almost rides over him, 'Car' arms, present arms,' but before the salute has been rendered we are rattling along the unequally undulating planks of the floating communication between the British and French banks of the river, to the great hazard of the miscellaneous stalls and baskets of trumpery goods on each side. It is ebb-tide, and the old turbid mud-bearing stream—the supposed *juxta magnum fluvium* of the Latin edition of 'Marco Polo'—sweeps with a gurgling grumble against and through the interspaces of the wooden barrier, as it bears onwards its earthy burden to the gulf.

The ascent to the opposite side of the bank is a steep one of loose planks, and the cart mules have enough to do to get to the top and obtain a footing on the road above, which is little better than a footpath that has lost itself on the moulder-ing banks that overhang the waters below. Here we pause to rest for a few moments, but are made sufficiently wretched at the sight of a deliquescent French sentry who, on that afternoon of July 6, when Fahrenheit's thermometer in-dicated ninety-seven in the shade, looked sweltered and faint as he leant on his musket in the same heavy cloak, coat, wrapper, or whatever other name it may go by, the same cap and trousers of never-varying hue, and the same gaitered boots in which it had been ordained that he should pass the winter's cold. Poor Jean Rôtir! your long blue coat, diminutive casquet, and flaring red pantaloons, are not exactly suited to your lively temperament in your present exposed situation.

To die for one's country is the glory of the soldier, and the greatest sacrifice he can offer on the altar of duty; but surely the soldier may expect that his life shall be valued and his comfort considered. It must be just as impossible for a soldier to do his country that full measure of patriotic

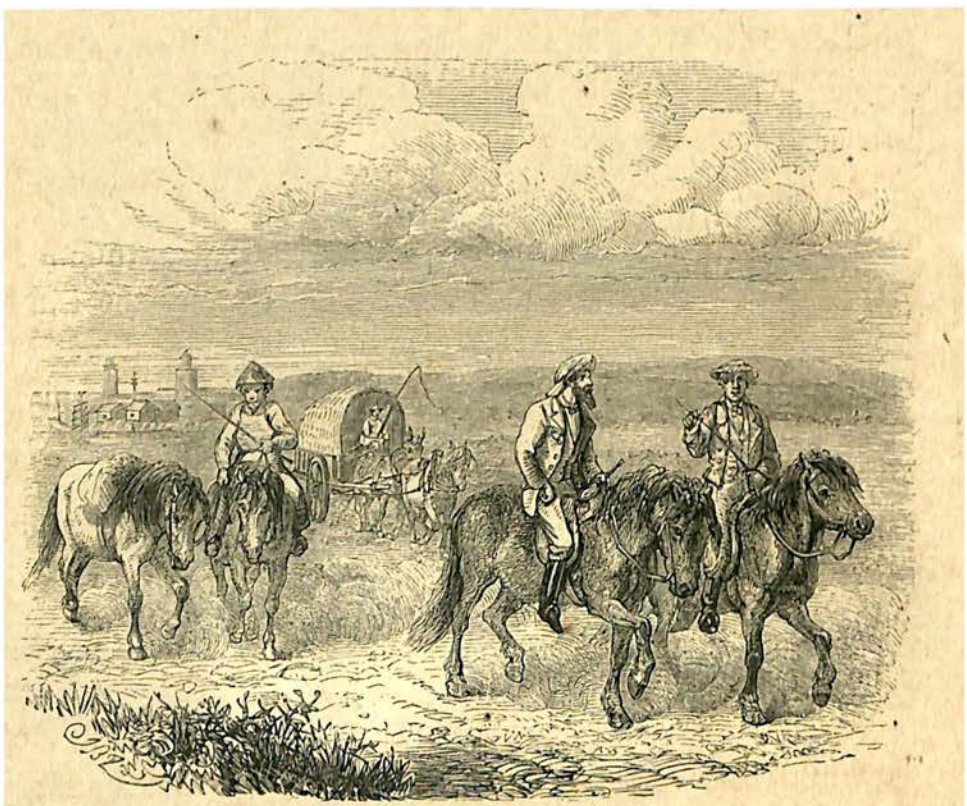
servitude which it seeks from him, as to be *toujours gaie* when on the verge of syncope or coup-de-soleil; and unless the characteristic and innate vivacity of the Frenchman be maintained and cared for, we can hardly imagine his meagre frame holding out long under such an adverse state of affairs.

How differently does the sentry on the opposite side of the river look, as he stands in the shade of his box, which, though only a mat one, is still a protection. He is as suitably clothed as the most serviceable white American drill will allow, which, for amplitude of coat and trousers, as well as lightness of texture, would excite the envy and desire of his fellows at home during the dog days; while his cerebral circulation is shielded from danger under the ægis of a helmet fit for an Achilles or an Ajax. And yet—perfidious climate—not many months ago, we saw him almost buried under a mass of woollens heaped upon him, in an external sheep-skin robe large enough to conceal the carcase of a Patagonian, with a fur cap, hot and heavy enough for a foot guardsman's bear-skin, stuck as closely about his head and ears as if it had grown there; and as he moved quickly about on his post, and stamped his feet, which were then experiencing that abstraction of heat peculiar to a temperature below zero, notwithstanding their concealment in the recesses of his impenetrable, yellow, elephantine boots, we thought him the queerest-looking animal in creation.

But he was then, and is now, clothed and cared for as befits the season; and as his existence is considered valuable to the nation which sent him on duty to a distant region, he is vigilantly provided for in all things that can conduce to preserve him efficient, as no other fighting man, we dare to say, is cared for in the world; for never was the British soldier better waited on, nor his requirements so much attended to, in the almost paternal solicitude manifested

towards him in this the most distant corner of the universe to which he has yet victoriously carried his arms.

Threading the dirty labyrinthine passage formed by the crowd of heterogeneous mud and brick dwellings that constitute this suburb — the 'French side,' as it is called since its occupation — and patiently submitting to the bewildering jangle of machines and tongues, the *dit donc*'s, *com-*



Start from Tien-tsin.

bien's, *sacre*'s, and *comme ça*'s of a painfully imitative yellow-skinned people, we, in process of time, free ourselves of the environing hovels that fringe the margin of the city, follow the narrow path which leads through the waste ground intervening between the houses and the encompassing 'San-ko-lin-tsin's Folly'—as the twelve miles of gingerbread entrenchment is termed, that extends like a great hoop around the key of Peking, and which was deemed by the valiant

Tartar General a sure defence against us last year—pass through a breach in its structure, and are in the open plain beyond. Immediately we can perceive an agreeable difference in the temperature and in the odoriferous constitution of the atmosphere; we can breathe freely; we have left behind us that horribly noisome stench that permeates everything, and finds its entrance everywhere, until it rises in almost visible reality before us; and we have distanced that heavy overpowering sense of suffocation that anyone may experience when he stands before a blazing furnace at midsummer.

The wind blows sickly and feverish across the monotonous unvarying plain, still it lends a refreshing sensation never experienced within the walls of the densely-packed town; and though the sun's rays are launched forth as fiercely as ever, they are partially mitigated by the green and yellow of the crops, which wave gently on each side of our path. So that before we have left Tien-tsin in obscurity, the doubts with which we started have melted away, and we have put up before our mental vision the old-fashioned school-boy proverb :—

Superanda omnis fortuna ferendo.

The mule driver seemed anxious to dispel any misgivings we might have entertained as to the speed of the mules he drove as we moved through the Tien-tsin streets, for he now chirruped and tirred in a most inspiriting manner, as if he would never stop. The brutes went along with their light load at an easy pace of five or six miles an hour, without any apparent fatigue or relaxation, while our ponies shuffled out their uncouth limbs in a measured stride, which they only interrupted at stray intervals to steal a mouthful of the tempting herbage that grew in dangerous proximity to their incisors. We trotted between small fields of hemp and millet, with now and again maize and melons in small patches, where mahogany-coloured labourers—naked as

when they were first ushered into existence—are toiling and scraping with unwearied industry, their queues concealed in the shred of blue or white cotton tied round their heads to protect them from the sun; and through uninteresting little villages of earthen houses, bearing long unpronounceable names. The best buildings are the temples with their walls of blue brick, their roofs of concave and convex tiles lurking beneath the pleasant shade of old willow trees planted centuries ago.

We are stopped near a ditch, by an old man and two boys, who significantly point to a small wooden trough and two buckets, which quickly catch the eyes of our quadrupeds. Little need is there to cry halt, for without any intimation from us they pull up, and as soon as water had been carried from the reservoir to the measure, they plunge their faces deep in the brackish liquid, from whence they are loth to withdraw them. The old man, who thinks it not only the convenience, but the duty, of every passenger to halt and refresh his animals before proceeding further, surmises we have come to shoot, and points with his withered old arm to a cluster of three or four scraggy willows on whose branches a pair of jabbering magpies and a coterie of unmusical crows have perched. We shake our heads, and think the opportunity a good one to take soundings in Chinese, so ask him in Mandarin speech, with a strong English accent, the name of the next village. He thinks for a great number of seconds, with his wrinkled old face, and with eyes and mouth staring at us fixedly, and at last, with a feeble oscillation of that venerable cranium, shouts out, loud enough to be heard a mile off, '*Pu-toong-wha.*'

He did not understand our language, though we spoke in his own, and with this early inauspicious attempt to test our knowledge of the colloquial, we were about to leave in disgust when the eldest boy, a thorough Flibbertigibbet, called out as if in mockery, extending his

little fist at the same time, 'Fukey, my much, my much, cash, cash!' Now although 'fukey,' in the vernacular of the Southern provinces, means 'friend,' or, as some say, 'stranger,' beyond, and to the north of the Shangtung promontory, it has no meaning, and has on every possible occasion been applied by saltwater Jack and sod-crushing John to all Chinese, no matter whether male or female, quite irrespective of the particular locality or province they may inhabit, or he may visit, until at length the painfully popular cognomen has recoiled on the donors, and now everywhere in and around Tien-tsin, the new *terra incognita* of Western wanderers, the vagabond *sans-culottes* unmercifully pelt the allies with what they may justly consider an opprobrious or appropriate epithet. 'My much' is an indigenous translation of 'how much,' or 'how sell, how buy,' in the slang of the *canaille* and petty shopkeepers of that city; and *cash* passes current for money, but we believed that, with the other offensive ingredients of that abhorred place, we had left behind us the ludicrously distorted collection of words, which the misguided Chinese belch forth as *sound* English, and which the British are labouring to teach when and wherever they are required to hold communion with them.

To find such verbal currency in this out-of-the-way tract surprised and disgusted us more than if we had run foul of a crocodile in these maize fields. The lively indignation with which we first listened to it at Singapore was mollified, to some extent, by the condoling manner in which we were told that the Chinese could not pronounce many of our simplest words, and were compelled to substitute others, as well as to insert some of their own, that they found pretty nearly agreed with the difficult ones in sound. Subsequently we found the Northern Chinese not so backward in making use of English words for which the Cantonese have exchanged meaningless sounds quite

foreign to either language. To say the least of it, this is a vile mongrel gibberish, requiring no small amount of ingenuity and patience to acquire and comprehend at first starting, especially when mumbled over by an adept Southern Chinese, by whom each word is rolled out with the same quiet undistinguishable monotonous drawl, entirely in keeping with the serious countenance he assumes, in his perplexing endeavour to thrust as many words into a sentence as he can.

Though the language now boasts a grammar and a vocabulary, alike necessary for Chinese and Europeans, who are obliged to acquire it ere they can hold intercourse with each other, I have always listened to a conversation between representatives of the two continents with side-splitting mirth, which I could not for the life of me restrain, even when serious business matters were discussed, or a grave rebuke was being administered to the Chinaman. No such emotion overcame me now, as it was apparent that this young rascal had picked up these fragments of a base coin somewhere, and was endeavouring to palm them off on us as the real article of commerce; so I at first pretended not to understand him, but unavailingly; he knew us to be 'fukeys,' and repeated his demand in 'fukey' speech. Consequently nothing remained but to give him 'cash,' and a few words to add to his slender stock.

What a curious and intricate task will the speculative philologist have in some future age, when not only the British, but other nations trading with China, have introduced their pet words, and had them twisted into all sorts of shapes and intonations to suit the unwieldy tongues of the thirty or forty millions of people, who are anxious to learn anything strange or uncouth, if so be it answers their purpose, and possesses simplicity and matter of fact!

As it is, the Anglo-Saxon furnishes by far the largest instalment of words. They rule paramount in the estimation

of the Chinese whose interest they serve. In truth, the Celestials find English so accommodating and elastic, and the intellects of their co-citizens and co-traders so acute, that they can modify, remodify, and introduce an infinity of words, until, as we remember at Hong Kong, the analogy between the copy and the original is so far lost, that an officer of the allied army, who besought the aid of a friend of ours in some business with a native merchant, fully believed the conversation that ensued to have been carried on in Chinese. He even went the length of complimenting the accomplished intermediator as to his fluency in Celestial phraseology. Not very long ago an amusing anecdote was told of an English and French *rencontre*, in which the parties concerned were unable to fraternise so fondly as they mutually desired, owing to their limited knowledge of each other's language. Nothing abashed at the shift they were put to, they found a convenient medium of expression in the new speech; in this they only imitated the natives, for so different is the *patois* of the Southerner to the Northern tongue, that those who employ them are as much at fault to speak and understand one another's thoughts as if they did not belong to the same great family, and fly at once, and as if by instinct, to 'pigeon English.'

Still it does not tend to raise the character of the early traders in an Englishman's estimation, to think that such an unpalatable mixture of everything whimsical and obtrusively ridiculous should have been introduced and propagated with better success than things of far greater moment and worth, until it has taken such deep root, and assumed such a pseudo-genuine character, that both parents seem to delight in its practice, and in a display of its especial peculiarities. Proud of the mess they have made in the well of English so defiled, they take pains to acquire a sufficiency of the *oglio* to carry on trade and communication, improving or disintegrating as they go on, until the original words are

transmogrified—almost deprived of their etymology, and launched forth unrecognisable to all but the initiated.

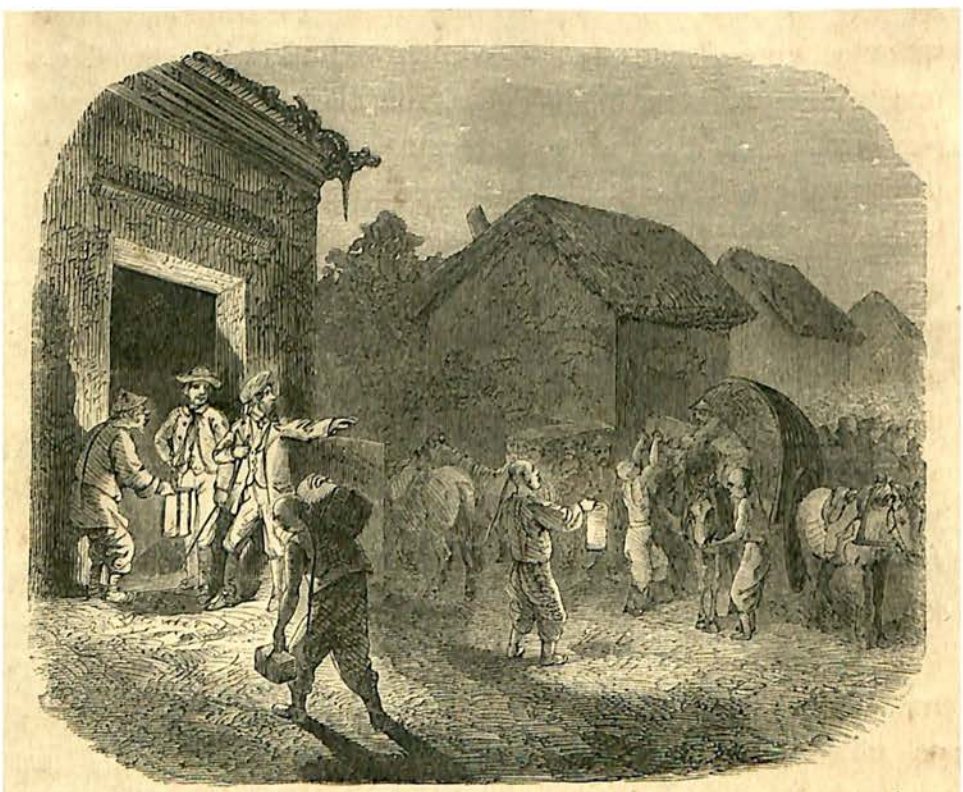
Moving onwards in a north-easterly direction, as the sun began to descend towards the earth, a dark and faintly defined haze appeared in the distant west, deeper in some spots than in others. I at first thought it was nothing but a bank of clouds, until M——, whose well-practised eyes had not been long out of office, gave it as his opinion that we were gazing on mountains. Sure enough, as we drew nearer, and before the daylight had been exchanged for obscurity, the irregular outlines of two high peaks towered up to a very respectable height in the dusky sky, and the misty edges of others in the background became more distinct. With rapture and delight we welcomed again the 'Western mountains,' after a wearisome residence of nearly nine months on a plain with nothing higher around us on which we could perch ourselves than the conical mounds of earth that mark the graves of those who have saluted the world. I recollected well the last time I saw them, on that morning of the 17th October, when they stood out in such glorious relief from a sky beautifully covered with cirri, ranged in parallel bars from south to north, high in the heavens; and how surprised I was then to notice that their heads and sides were already dappled and streaked with silvery snow that had fallen no one knew when. And I also thought what a strange thing it seemed, when about the middle of that same day, the hills and the snow were hid in dismal sombre clouds;—that instead of a bright cheerful sun, we should have comparative darkness and gloom, with gusts of wind, cold and biting from the frigid north, sweeping down the streets of the Peking suburb, and across the large tract of waste ground over which the funeral cortège of our murdered men moved slowly in the blinding dust carried by the shivering blast, until the Russian cemetery was reached. It was a notable day for all, and the noble hills at whose feet the sad

tragedy had been enacted, and whose grey summits frowned down in silent reproof on the torturers of helpless men, skulked for very shame behind the opportune gloom that wrapped all visible nature in a mournful shade.

When the twilight had forsaken us, and everything was hid in darkness, after groping about to keep on the proper path, we entered the village, hamlet, or town of Te-tau—distant forty leagues, or nearly fourteen miles from Tien-tsin—a most wretched assemblage of earthen burrows huddled up together, and thrown on the top of an artificial mound. This was hemmed in on both sides by a canal fed from a small lake somewhere to the east, spanned over by a couple of primitive bridges of square stone slabs, by one of which we rattled into the dark main street, and were conducted to the only inn in the place, where, passing through a narrow gateway, we entered as unpromising and neglected an establishment as civilised man ever ventured into. The most villanous smells greeted us, accompanied by a flock of unwashed men, who by their obsequiousness and bawling, and readiness to grapple with everything we possessed, seemed to be landlords on the verge of bankruptcy, but with very meagre notions of business and civility. This was our first night's halt, and it did not strike either of us as a place likely to afford pleasant or even tolerable accommodation; but remembering the motto with which we had set out, we could not well grumble, nor did we feel inclined to do so. Journeying in a new country brings such an amount of excitement and expectancy that an uncomfortable night in perspective has no terrors, though one feels more at ease when one knows that a quiet chamber, free from nocturnal small fry, and destitute of gratuitous aromas, awaits the termination of a glowing day's ride.

Our ponies were led through a mass of filth to where some posts were fixed in the ground, with wooden mangers to each; to these they were fastened, and in the mangers they were

supposed to feed. After this they might go to sleep on their legs, for, tied up so close to the stakes that their knees could not reach the ground, it was impossible for them to assume the recumbent position; indeed, we have always noticed that the Chinese never allow their ponies or mules by any means to rest in the natural manner; for what reason we could not learn, unless it be that forage is too scarce and expen-



First night's halting-place.

sive to be made bedding of, and that if the animals lay down in the mud a great amount of time and labour would be expended in cleaning them.

Yet the same treatment, unnatural and prejudicial though it be, is in vogue at Manila—where the ponies are continually kept standing on wooden platforms, without a chance of relieving their limbs by a change of position; and where, it might be supposed, the Spaniards would have inculcated a

better management of the hardy little beasts bred on the Philippine islands.

It was now our turn to be shown the 'cribs' we were to occupy for the night, and though the general aspect of the place gave no hopes of anything like luxury, we were not prepared to adapt ourselves readily to the hovel, the door of which was ostentatiously flung wide by one of the perfumed attendants. Opening like a cellar from the courtyard, this repulsive room exhibited nothing but mud and cobwebs—mud roof, mud walls, mud floor, and two mud benches, one on each side, to serve as sitting and sleeping places; with a bank of mud between, in which was fixed an iron pot that had been but recently used in the preparation of some non-descript meal. It had left a most ungrateful taint to mingle with the damp, earthy emanations from soil, dust, and musty goods; in truth it was of such a nasty character, that we were driven out again into the courtyard, before we had time to examine the means of ventilation afforded by two small windows covered carefully with oiled paper. The remaining rooms, which all opened into the courtyard, like so many pig-styes, were even worse. We had almost given up all thoughts of sleeping under cover, when a lumber or store room was discovered and explored. Though it was about as foul a place as the other, and as exempt from any claim to cleanliness, it was pronounced just possible that a few hours might be passed on the stove bed-place at the end of a small space partitioned off from the larger one. Hermetically closed windows, condemned for ages to remain fixed in their primitive posts, and to moulder there, were unceremoniously thrust outwards or inwards, to the great discomfiture of mammoth spiders, that had been ousted out of their retreats and fastnesses, and stood menacingly eyeing us in secure corners, with the remains of their cunningly-woven fabrications adhering to their limbs. Other shutters, too obdurate to relinquish their hold, had great apertures poked

in them for the admission of air whenever the walls and frames would admit of our taking such a liberty.

But all to no purpose—the heat was sickening, and more intensely steamy than we had ever experienced it before; and with the smells that pervaded the abode, made us feel uncomfortable enough. No improvement took place in our condition when two saucers were filled with fetid bean oil, the pith of a small kind of rush immersed in it serving the purposes of a wick, and combustion sent forth a smoky effluvium partaking largely of the unenviable qualities of asafœtida.

We had nothing to eat but eggs, nor to drink but tea—*brick tea.* The former were boiled almost as hard as stones, their freshness being more than doubtful. I have reason to believe that the Chinese, with their partiality for everything bearing the impress of antiquity, are inclined to favour the quality of staleness in eggs, as well as in other articles of food; but hunger made us careless on the subject until a fair number had been disposed of, and then we were too tired to reflect on what we had eaten. But the tea was altogether beyond the bounds of toleration after the first dose had been greedily swallowed, and, had it been taken as a sample, would for ever have damaged the reputation of China as a grower of that commodity. It tasted more like a concentrated decoction of hay seeds, with a powerful *soupçon* of the bitter extract of Socotrine aloes, than an infusion of the fragrant leaf. The basins, too, out of which we drank were deeply incrusted with mud and the accumulated dirt of years, like the dusky hide of the garlic-smelling individual who acted in the double capacity of host and waiter. His curiosity and rudeness were only equalled by the pains he took to project his physiognomy as near as he could to ours without actually coming into collision, and by shouting as loudly as stentorian lungs would enable him, whenever he volunteered to give information or replied to a question.

We were labouring under a thirst that could not be

quenched by the liquids brought to us. The water was detestable and lukewarm, swarming with active little denizens which, as animalculæ, most of us may have admired microscopically. Here they appeared to have increased to a very unusual size, and were endowed apparently with a corresponding degree of strength and energy to compensate for the demands made upon them for exertion by the tenacious nature of the semi-fluid medium in which they were condemned to exist. The alum-stick was asked for, but though an article of common utility at Tien-tsin, and other places where the water contains earthy particles, here it seemed to have been omitted from their brief register of household necessaries, or rather luxuries. After a patient search, a small fragment was procured, and presented to us as a curiosity, while the donors stood by as we proceeded to test its efficacy in rendering the liquid drinkable; but, as bad luck would have it, little benefit resulted from its use—though the quantity of mud, &c., deposited was somewhat astounding—for it gave, in return for what it had removed, a rather potent astringency and *gout* of the salt, which, added to the stirring and handling, and tepid condition of the compound, almost acted on us as an emetic.

Our evening meal, though what on ordinary occasions might be called 'light,' lay heavy upon us, and to augment the group of miseries contained in the being 'out of sorts,' myriads of audacious flies, as inquisitive and offensive as the people of the inn, congregated on our hands and faces, titillating them to a degree impossible to bear; while, as a grand *finale* for the later performance of the evening, invisible mosquitos and dreaded sand-flies hovered around in such swarms that the air was filled with the soft thin music of their wings.

After seeing our ponies fed—that is, entertained—on a manger-full of chopped straw, a small measure of fine bran, and another of barley, mixed up into a soft consistency

by water—and after noting that they had obtained a sufficiency of that element, which required that they should be led about in order to 'warm it, and settle their stomachs' before commencing their meal — M—— went to bed. By which it will be understood that he retired to the inner apartment, laid himself down on the brick couch, carefully enveloping every part of his body—head, feet, and hands included—in a sheet which he had, with great forethought and luxurious intentions, brought on the journey.

I, alas! could seek no such mitigation of my woes and grievances. Somnus had fairly deserted me—been driven away by the discomforts everywhere around, and the only resource of which I might avail myself was reading or writing by the smoky flame of the primitive nauseating lamp. And to these I applied myself with a desperate determination to think of nothing about or in the room, but to coerce nature into a sleepy mood by means of deep thought and physical fatigue.

No sooner, however, had I settled vigorously to the task, than '*ping*' sounded shrilly out a mosquito in dangerous propinquity to my ear. His war-note is abruptly terminated by a loud twang, after which he is silent. He has fixed himself on the nape of my neck as tenderly as if he had a special regard for the subject of my studies, and was unwilling to disturb me; but I know his subtle nature too well, and dislodge him with all speed, though before I can do so he has left evidence of his visit that will become more conspicuous by to-morrow morning. While I am scratching and tearing at the spot, a goodly company, in skirmishing order, have safely established themselves over my perspiring face, their long, thin, angular legs enabling them to alight so gently and so stealthily that I am totally unconscious of their proximity until the handkerchief is once more raised to my moist features, and I can then see their puny bodies, only partially gorged with thickened blood, wheeling steadily between me

and the lamp, and hear their emphatic clamours at my interruption of their feast.

As the evening wears on, they throw off their timorousness, and boldly advance, heedless of annihilation, to a general attack on every exposed surface; and the absolute necessity there exists for acting continually and vigilantly on the defensive throws me into a feverish deluge of perspiration, from which I am only able to rescue myself by a walk in the courtyard.

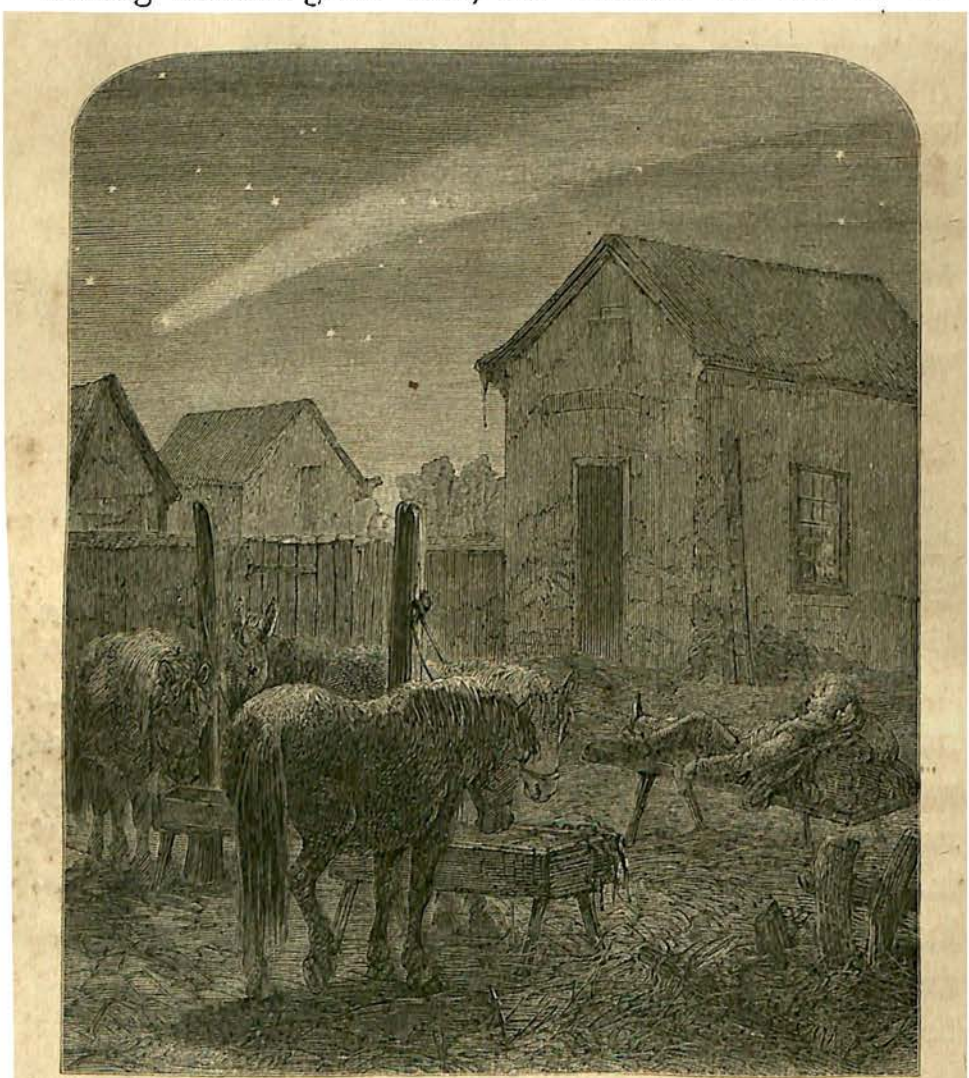
Presently I return and make another fruitless attempt to read. I have been studiously endeavouring to peruse the Chamber of Horrors in Dante's 'Inferno,' and, finding the task too great, quietly set myself down to be worried to sleep, after closing the book and thrusting it out of the way of the rancid bean oil that appears to burn without any palpable diminution in quantity or improvement in smell.

Scarcely have I adjusted my limbs to the slope of the table bars on which they rest, and resigned, as nearly as possible, all external cares, when a large brown member of the gnat family circles around the light for a few seconds, keeping up an animated duet with an emaciated grey individual of the same species whose movements are less active and more feeble, and whose tiny voice is of the shrillest treble imaginable. Soon they are joined by a zebra-striped veteran, and the trio, like the witches in 'Macbeth,' dance madly around, chanting their baneful maledictions savagely in my ears, until they are disturbed by a whiff from the handkerchief, and away they go to swell the ranks of the throng that make such a formidable din in the vicinity of the bed-place.

I have hardly time to see them fairly away than a quartette of the orchestra — hungry and lank as musicians generally are — have, uninvited and unwelcomed, alighted from their aerial promenade on the back of my hand, and there they are, busily refreshing themselves after their

dulcet performance, greedily sucking up the vital fluid through their long, sharp trunks. At last they have obtained a sufficiency, and are ungratefully rejecting in its place an irritant fluid.

Worst of all, only a short distance from these sanguinary creatures, working silently away on its own account, is the terrible and much-dreaded sand-fly — an insignificant-looking emerald-green mite, not one-half the size of the



Comfort of a Chinese Inn.—The Comet.

mosquito, but possessing ten times its venom. I aim at its destruction, but it is as quick in retreat as in attack, and escapes into the darkness.

This torturing attack and defence go on until I am perfectly fagged out, and can bear up against it no longer, for it is a thoroughly exhausting business; and yet I dare not go to sleep.

I determined on making my couch in the open air — with all its risks of damp and rain, and danger from some of the vagabonds whom I saw prowling about as I entered, and who looked anything but trustworthy. One of the mouldering half doors is torn from its languishing supports and dragged to the outside, where it is laid on a ricketty manger standing on three and a half legs near the mules and ponies, who sniff and snort at my appearance.

Without delay, and without any preparatory undressing, I am, after two or three acrobatic feats over and under it, at last on its surface, and, stretching gladly out, offer myself the consolation that at length I have secured a sleeping-place where the gnats and sand-flies *may* chance to miss me, and where I may escape being stifled in heat.

Alas, I am speedily undeceived! The air is so chokingly warm and heavy, and the ground throws up such reeking vapours, that the drowsy god remains callous to my appeals.

A long time is spent star-gazing, and following that mysterious comet which took us all by surprise a few days before. What portent of change does it bear to the Chinese empire? I wonderingly think.

CHAPTER III.

STORY OF THE GENERAL CHOO.

HIEN-FUNG—the 'Abundant Plenty'—has been reported sick and dead times without end within the last two months. May these reports be incorrect, and may not some dreadful convulsion shake China to pieces?*

> When beggars die there are no comets seen,
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

What intrigue and wickedness may even at this moment be hatching—set on foot by the presence of the awe-inspiring meteor through whose ghost-like substance we are watching the stars? Another comet did so, and we remember reading the old-fashioned tale. We endeavour to recall it.

Nearly a thousand years have been put down to the credit of the present world, and to the land of Sinim in particular, since the son of an obscure scribbler and village pedagogue, too lazy and idle to work in the fields, entered himself on the muster roll of a horde of freebooters, and soon proved an able and desperate associate in every perilous enterprise in which courage and cunning were required. The illustrious Tang dynasty was drawing near the usual Chinese dynastic dissolution, with its long list of wise princes, who had ruled so well, and who had raised the national prosperity to a

* Strange to say, Hien-fung died a few weeks after these notes were penned, and his son, Key-syang—the 'Auspicious Omen'—now sits on the Dragon throne.

degree before unknown,—as far beyond that of the Western middle ages as the civilisation of Europe of the present day is superior to the grovelling semi-barbarism of the modern Chinese. They were rapidly losing their manly policy and sage governance in degenerate profligacy and imbecile counsels, though retaining energy enough to crush this and other gangs of plunderers and cut-throats, who at the present day would be dubbed rebels and patriots.

Choo, as this promising youth was named, with his accomplices in crime, was obliged to sue for mercy, and obtained it only to become the, in all probability, willing slave and swashbuckler of the traitorous, plotting, prime minister, Tsuy-ying, who, to serve a purpose he had in view, procured for him a high command somewhere towards the frontier of the empire, and 'to make assurance doubly sure,' in winning him over, bestowed on him many marks of his favour and condescension. At this time the eunuchs were numerous at court — probably as many as existed a few years ago, when their number was said to amount to 5,000. This large establishment, besides other means of replenishment, was maintained by a law passed more than thirty years ago, ordaining that the sons of murderers who had destroyed the male heirs of any one should be given over for emasculation and the service of the palace.

Some of these domestics were men of ability and tact, and their duties and position around the throne, and in the residence of the Emperor, gained for them a more than just share of the Imperial ear and confidence. At least so thought the minister, and his whole mind was bent on devising the most efficient and safe means of securing their extirpation. Therefore, at an early stage of the proceedings, he brought forward a plea, the necessity of which he had not arguments sufficient to maintain, and endeavoured to convince the sovereign that it was essential to the safety of the kingdom that these men should be destroyed. The Emperor was,

however, not convinced of their treasonable offences, and expressed an assurance that they could not all be guilty of the charges preferred against them, as he knew several who were fully entitled to his confidence. To prevent the possibility of a conspiracy, he permitted some of the most questionable characters to be punished as examples for the others.

The intentions of the minister were foiled, and his jealousy and ambition thwarted by this leniency, but only for a time. His designs were made more desperate and urgent, by learning that the eunuchs had become aware of the enmity he bore towards them, and were counter-plotting his downfall and destruction. At this crisis, he privately invited the General Choo to his palace, and by feasting and well-timed flattery, with a sprinkling of hard wrung tears, he obtained his promise of assistance in the developement of his plans. Then pretending to the Emperor that the army under Choo's command was necessary in the capital, to counterbalance that of another force under a general who had assumed a haughty and dictatorial manner towards the government, Choo was summoned to guard the Imperial palace.

Soon after his arrival, sixteen leaders of a party who had opposed Tsuy-ying in some of his measures were the first victims sacrificed to ministerial vengeance; and speedily after, seventy eunuchs were swept from the register of the living world at a single establishment, and ninety at another. With a clear knowledge of the Emperor's simplicity and dulness of perception, the minister attired himself in the deepest mourning, shed bitter tears when he appeared before him, and prostrated himself on the ground like a felon, as he demanded the punishment which he confessed he merited, for so prematurely dealing out justice without his master's sanction. The stratagem was successful. The Emperor grieved to see the right hand of his empire so stricken and cast down for this unauthorised, but, no doubt, wise infliction of the law's penalties towards conspirators; indeed, was so

much affected that he wept; and, anxious to condole with and show his unalterable attachment and confidence in his counsellor, he took off his girdle and graciously conferred it upon him — thus elevating Tsuy-ying to the highest dignity possible.

But the work was only begun; for the minister's malice was still but partially appeased, and he was determined to gratify it to the utmost.

Several hundred of the body guard and palace spies were yet in the way, and Choo and his bloodthirsty soldiery were ever ready, only awaiting the signal, to perpetrate any atrocity required at their hands. The Emperor was again appealed to to save his throne from the dangerous intrigues of the eunuchs, who were said to be secretly preparing to murder him and usurp the government, and it was urged that nothing short of extermination of the whole body could be recommended to avert a catastrophe which was all but inevitable. With such ominous reports dinning incessantly in his ears, from the tongue of such a seemingly faithful servant — and noticing the altered demeanour of the eunuch guard, the despot weakly yielded.

Everything having been prepared, the general quietly unleashed his bloodhounds at the dead of night, and the miserable creatures were hunted out of their unguarded sleeping-places, and despatched in cold blood. 'Their doleful cries of murder,' says the ancient chronicler, 'and shrieks for aid, together with yells of indignation and imprecations at the merciless injustice done to them, extended to every part, and sounded dolefully far beyond the precincts of the palace.'

For this service, and by Tsuy-ying's influence and interest, Choo was ennobled, had the title of king bestowed upon him, was invested by Imperial authority with the unimpeachable designation of Tseun-chung—which signifies the Perfectly Faithful—and, with the title, the highest post the army could furnish, corresponding to that of commander-in-chief.

When too late, Tsuy-ying began to perceive that his useful friend had discovered the value of the powers with which he had been invested, and that their possession had roused to a highly hazardous pitch an ambitious spirit of which the Perfectly Faithful had not previously given any indications. Alarmed for the consequences — though he still maintained an external show of friendship — he began to cherish very different views, and to prepare himself for the worst in the struggle for domination with a by no means despicable competitor. Unfortunately, he was not quick enough to save himself; for Tseun-chung, with the capital at his mercy and the soldiery at his beck and call, observed his precautions, and, fearing that he might yet possess the means of advantageously opposing him, caused him, with several of his friends, to be murdered.

To be the ruler of this great country had been long the desire of this upstart, but he had the subtlety and patience to await his opportunity. Having prospered so well in counter-plotting, and attained the moral and physical force necessary to enable him firmly to establish his *prestige*, he found nothing now remained to delay the realisation of his most aspiring wishes but the person of the Emperor. As no obstacle lay in the way of removing him from the throne, it was boldly determined on that he should at once resign or abdicate in favour of the Perfectly Faithful; and a written request to that effect was despatched to His Majesty, accompanied by a military force strong enough for any emergency.

An entertainment was being given in the Gallery of Joy (how very contradictory these names seem to be bestowed!), at which the Emperor presided, and to this place the mandate came, and the soldiers. Before His Imperial Majesty had time to descend from the chair of state, they forcibly expelled the guests and the spectators, amidst lamentations for their own fate, and curses on the head of the incautious Tsuy-ying for recommending to such powerful offices the base,

unworthy Tsuen-chung, who was now overturning the throne and altars of the land. Angry and grieved, they tumultuously crowded the streets, impatiently looking out for some solution of the mysterious proceedings in the gallery, and were somewhat relieved when the Emperor arrived amongst them. Notwithstanding his many great and glaring faults, the people were strongly attached to him, revering him for the sake of his dynastic predecessors; so, as he passed through their ranks, their joyful exclamations rose high and loud, and a universal benediction pealed out clear and distinctly, 'Wan Suy: ten thousand years: live for ever!'

From the mass of unfaithful soldiers that closely hemmed him in from his devoted subjects, he answered with tears, 'Say not Wan Suy, for I shall never again be your sovereign!'

He and his queen were conveyed to prison, and strongly and carefully guarded, only a few servants being permitted to remain near them. No communication was allowed them with their friends outside. The sceptre of empire had been wrested from their hands, and their imprisonment was rendered doubly irksome by the jealous manner in which they were watched and every movement criticised. Bereaved of hope, and living in constant dread of death, they gave themselves up to grief, and, like many other unfortunate wretches in more enlightened countries and times, tried to find a solace for their woes in frequent recourse to intoxication — the means for which were very readily furnished by the usurper's command. Tsuen-chung, at length becoming tired of wearing a mask so long and of soothing the alarms of the populace, availed himself of a favourable opportunity, and privately ordered two of his officers, with a hundred men, to the prisoners' apartments.

After butchering the attendants who were found near the door, they forced their way into the apartment of the Emperor, whom they found recovering from a fit of inebriation. The noise and tumult at the entrance had roused him, and with

but a single garment thrown around his body, he ran or staggered about a pillar to escape from his unrelenting murderers. Their footsteps were too steady and fleet, and their hands too well trained to the work, to suffer him to escape. He was perforated by a dozen knives, and his bleeding body dragged away to a place of concealment.

When tidings of the assassination were brought to Choo, he artfully broke out into violent demonstrations of rage and sorrow, throwing himself on the ground and giving way to floods of tears. 'The slaves have disobeyed me,' he screamed, 'and will cause my name to be infamous to ten thousand ages!' The better to blind the people, he forthwith directed that his two creatures—the agents in the Emperor's death—should be executed.

One of them, Yew Yung, whose dishonourable name has been committed to history, on going to meet his death, called out recriminatingly, 'I am sold a victim to stifle the reproaches of the world—but how will it appear to the gods?'

The ill-fated Emperor, Chau-tsung, left nine sons, and these Tsuen-chung soon suspected would become barriers to his successful progress. He therefore resolved to clear them from his path, and inviting them to an entertainment at his residence near the Lake Kew-Ku, he barbarously caused them all to be strangled and their bodies to be consigned to the waters of the lake.

He had now reached the summit of despotic power; everything likely to interfere with his pleasure or authority had been sedulously put aside, and he gave himself up to an existence such as a mind like his could relish, with

> His companions unletter'd, rude and shallow:
> His hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports.

But one of those strange, unaccounted-for meteors—like that I had been peering at, as it sped with scarcely perceptible velocity on its midnight journey across the heavens,

sprung up suddenly as if to accuse him of his misdeeds, and every night threw its ghastly, phosphorescent light in pale yellow vapours far behind it. The eyes of the Chinese in those troubled days were furtively directed towards the comet, while omens of bad portent were predicted to the nations of the world. Tsuen-chung had not yet completed his amount of crime. The visitation of the comet filled his mind with dread and apprehensions of misfortune to himself; so he suddenly remembered that thirty men still lived, whose influence at court had long caused him anxiety. They had ventured to rebuke him sternly for his partiality to one of his favourites; and the weird-like glare of the celestial apparition impelled him to their destruction, on political grounds alone. The comet one night witnessed their last breath. What does it behold now?

A favourite—because a few of the Literati, whose province it was to examine candidates and to confer degrees, would not permit him to attain to scholastic rank in consequence of his unfitness—conceived a violent dislike to them, and going to Tsuen-chung, said, 'These fellows always call themselves the "pure flow" (a Chinese phrase for persons who are incorruptible by bribes or undue influence), they deserve to be thrown into the Yellow river and converted into the "muddy flow!"' The heartless wag was listened to, and the tyrant laughed merrily at the joke, while he vowed that the suggestion should be carried out instantly. Of course the luckless scholars perished.

The defunct Emperor's wife was still alive, and to make more secure for himself the Imperial throne, on which he yet sat tremblingly, he married her. For some brief time she contrived to inspire him with a certain degree of respect and even awe, by her rigid correctness and great intelligence, qualifying, for a time, his cruel and dissolute habits; but after her decease he became as abandoned as before, and allowed his slaves and favourites to commit the

greatest atrocities, until his evil actions recoiled upon himself. His wicked and unprincipled heart induced him to perpetrate a diabolical act in his own household, which so exasperated his son Moo-te, a lad only sixteen years of age, but in every way worthy of his sire, that while the former lay ill in bed, he abused him in foul language, murdered him, and then sent off a messenger to slay his brother, accompanied by a document he had forged in his father's name, setting forth that his brother, Yew-wan, was a rebellious and disobedient son, but that Moo-te was faithful and dutiful. The army was also thereby commanded to destroy Yew-wan, and to deliver the control of their actions and of the nation to Moo-te.

In the drawing up of this paper it is supposed that he had been aided by one of the leading generals. By liberal donations to the troops, and with the help of this instrument, he ascended the throne, and then wasted ten years in the most profligate manner, until, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, he committed suicide on hearing of the approach of an enemy who was marching towards his head-quarters to give him battle for his empire.

Thus terminated the After Liang Dynasty, and with its memories faded from my mind all external impressions, for I had launched into and was gently sailing along the margin of the Lethean Sea, when *whirr*—

> The weak-eyed bat,
> With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing,

but not without giving me a thorough start-up, which nearly went to upset bed-board, manger, and occupant; completely alarmed my equine neighbours, and drew forth a stern round of grumbling, swearing, and ill-natured remarks from the Jehu. He sprung out of the cart to secure the animals, which broke away and went scampering over the place, then betook himself to the dormitory of the landlord and his

assistants in order to obtain the services of a watchman, as he seemed to dislike being disturbed, and was influenced by much nervous anxiety on the score of thieves and murderers.

Our nocturnal disturber, the bat, the emblem of longevity, painted and inscribed on lantern, congratulatory billet, funebreal garniture and household decoration, and entitled here:—the 'heavenly mouse' or 'rat,' the 'fairy' or 'flying rat,' the 'night swallow,' and the 'belly wings,' flies, it is affirmed, with its head downwards, because its brain is heavier than its body, and only ventures out when the cruel hawk it so dreads during the day has gone to its nest:—this little dusky visitor was but the *avant courier* of a small colony of the Vespertilionidæ, the various members of which came skimming and fluttering close to my face, and curled under the eaves of the huts in the most erratic and confused manner.

I watched them for a long time with sleepy admiration; for though the Chinese have given them such fantastic but not inappropriate names, they have not been made by them objects of superstitious reverence, nor have the repulsive habits of 'Wandering Willie' created any feelings of disgust or disfavour. When the Greeks borrowed their unprepossessing form to represent their terror-inspiring harpies, adding the demoniacal face of a woman; when, by the Mosaical law, the bat was classed among the forbidden and unclean animals; and when, in the middle ages, magicians, wizards, and 'uncanny' folk were believed to make it their confidant, and the evil one could not be fitly represented unless he had borrowed from them a pair of leathern wings, the sons of Fohi and Han had compassionately taken this harmless creature under their care. To preserve it from harm they clothed it in the traditional garb of antiquity, and made it the type of what is to them, perhaps, the most sacred and best courted of all other terrestrial, and, maybe, celestial favours in China—long life.

In spite of the heat, the steam, and the stench, the flickering motions of my nocturnal visitor became less and less frequent and interesting; the hollow-sounding click of the watchman's bamboo beater, produced by the terrified carter, grew fainter and less obtrusive; the hum of the mosquitos became rather pleasant than otherwise; the comet appeared to fade into thick fleecy clouds which descended earthwards, bringing with them a respireable atmosphere and balmy zephyrs to fan the feverish beings below, and—and I fell asleep—into a sleep as sound as that enjoyed by either of the seven noble youths of Ephesus, though not so long.

My repose was not extended to 187 years—or minutes. An unfriendly Chanticleer, perched on a beam not far from me, suddenly set up his *reveille* with most startling effect.

CHAPTER IV.

LONG BILLS — MOSQUITO TACTICS — RAISED VILLAGES AND LONELY COUNTRY — A WATERY DISTRICT — MILITARY STATION — CHINESE SOLDIERS, THEIR QUALITIES AND TRADITIONS — ENDURANCE OF PAIN — THE NUMBER-ONE DOCTOR — MA-YUEN, A CHINESE WARRIOR — DISCIPLINE, FIDELITY, CRUELTY TOWARDS PRISONERS — DEATH BEFORE DISHONOUR — THE AVERSION OF THE PEOPLE TO BEAR ARMS — IMPERIAL ARMIES — MILITARY INSTITUTIONS — OUR CO-TRAVELLERS — GREAT THIRST — HEADS OF THE PEOPLE — BEGGARDOM — HEARTLESS PILFERERS.

'TA-MÍ, ta-mí! Shumah ta-mí?' M.'s firm decided tone of voice roused me from as profound a sleep as mortal man could possibly desire in such an inhospitable hostelry, and to the consciousness of a stormy debate that was going on between him and the *soi-disant* master of the house, regarding the various items in a bill about three feet in length, at the same time that I became thoroughly aware of the filthiness of my *al fresco* bed-chamber. Though the daylight, in a leaden-grey complexion, was struggling hard to obtain an ascendency over the stubborn gloom of the dawn, and surrounding objects were all but imperceptible, everybody was astir and busy. M. had been up for a long time, had seen the ponies fed, and was now beginning to practise the Mandarin tongue with a force and intentness of purpose that would have startled a dormouse. The particular matter in dispute at that moment seemed to be a novelty to him, as he kept repeating and inquiring about it, until I rejoiced to learn that it was only barley—the barley that had been given to our four-footed bed-fellows.

Rubbing my eyes, hot and painful as they felt from the yellow glare and smoky flame of the lamp, and scrambling

down from the hard board, booted and spurred, with legs cramped and head aching, I did not find the prospect of such an early getting-up at all cheering; but there was no help for it, and I longed to get a mouthful of good air. Another violent conflict of tongues ensued, when the total amount of our charge for the seven hours' entertainment was announced. It was the almost fabulous sum of 4,000 cash, equivalent to four dollars, or sixteen shillings and eightpence sterling! This was enough to make a small independence for any frugal Chinese to lend out at interest! So unconscionable a squeeze was not to be submitted to for such paltry accommodation.

M. was firm; the host was loquacious, urgent, and stiff-necked; but the former conquered, and something less than 2,000 of the base coinage sufficed to satisfy all claims. The man at length retired with a smiling countenance, no doubt delighted at having discovered that the outside barbarians knew the value of *tchen* as well as himself, and had as much intelligence given them to guard against rapacious attacks.

There was no breakfast for us, and being as ready for moving as we were when entering the village the evening before, we had only to set the cart on its way and depart. But the shaft mule was as contumacious and spiteful as I have found the majority of her mongrel race. She had to be coaxed, scolded, and castigated, and eventually punished by a gag of thin sharp cord tied across from one cheek of the bit to the other, and passing below the upper lip to rest upon the gum, before she could be rendered at all tractable. Even then bullying and shouting were required in addition to drive her under and between the shafts, and to retain her there until the rude gear was fixed; after which a similar procedure had to be enforced against the little jennet in the traces. All this occupied so much time that it was quite daylight before we could start, and the sun had become fully visible ere we had crossed the stone bridge

that led from the poverty-stricken village down a steep bank to the low ground beyond.

Once fully awake, we began to feel the dreadfully irritating effects of the mosquitos' operations. Every inch of skin exposed to their venomous bites was raised into numerous little eminences like ant-hills, or old-fashioned hair trunks studded with round-headed brass nails. In the middle of each mark was a semi-pellucid vesicle denoting the spot where the merciless proboscis had pierced and burrowed. The tingling, itching, and throbbing sensation that afflicted face, neck, and hands, was excruciatingly annoying and painful. The agony I endured for some hours is indescribable, and can be but faintly imagined by those who have never thoroughly undergone the process of tattooing as practised by the irresistible and active mosquito of North China.

With the cart in front jogging away at a lively pace, and Ma-foo on his scraggy grey Bucephalus bumping behind, we moved along in anything but cheerful spirits, feeling as unrefreshed by our short slumber as if we had never slept at all. There was nothing in the country through which we rode to divert our minds from the 'out of sorts' condition we were in, and the sun already gave tokens of a blistering day, as it glanced upwards in a hazy flood of light.

Onwards we proceeded over a narrow track, in a great, flat, and totally unpicturesque plain, with no living or moving object, save some tiny white sails threading the convolutions of a hidden canal that in all likelihood opens into the Peiho, not far from Tien-tsin. Nothing was to be seen as far as the eye could scan towards the horizon, but a low marshy waste; a sea of purplish-green heath, wild and desolate for the greater part, with here and there some stunted patches of unhealthy-looking millet and hemp suffering from neglect; a moor or heath of the most depressing aspect, worse even than the Aldershot long valley on a November day. In this scene there was an absence of trees, hedges, fences, or

walls, that gave it a monotony quite appalling. Away on the extremity of the moor we presently distinguish high mounds of earth, rising like islands at long intervals from the dead level, and as we approach we perceive that they are topped by haggard-looking villages of mud and millet-stalks, with a few sickly willow trees striving to throw their branches over the lowly dwellings, as if to screen their poverty from observation.

From the mouth of the Peiho to within forty miles of Peking, and on both sides of the river for very many miles inland, the country seems to be generally lower than the banks. High plots are raised to a height of at least twelve feet by the earth dug out from a series of wide ditches which always encircle them, and lead, when possible, to lower levels. On these the villages are perched; such elevation not only in smaller clusters of dwellings, but in the towns, is rendered necessary, the natives inform us, in consequence of the Peiho, at lengthened but uncertain periods, overflowing its banks and inundating the whole country far and near. It then submerges crops and everything on its bosom sometimes for weeks together, during which time great distress and inconvenience are occasioned by the unavoidable suspension of labour and loss of property.

Ominous-looking *san pans*, or flat-bottomed boats, kept in good repair and preserved from the weather under little sheds of millet-stalk, are gathered together around those hamlets that lie far from the river, as well as near those on its borders. We were at first perplexed as to the use that could possibly be made of these punts, seeing they were so numerous and so much cared for, and yet there were no canals nor sheets of water near on which they could be serviceable. We afterwards learnt that they formed the sole means of maintaining a communication between one place and another during the time the country was laid under water.

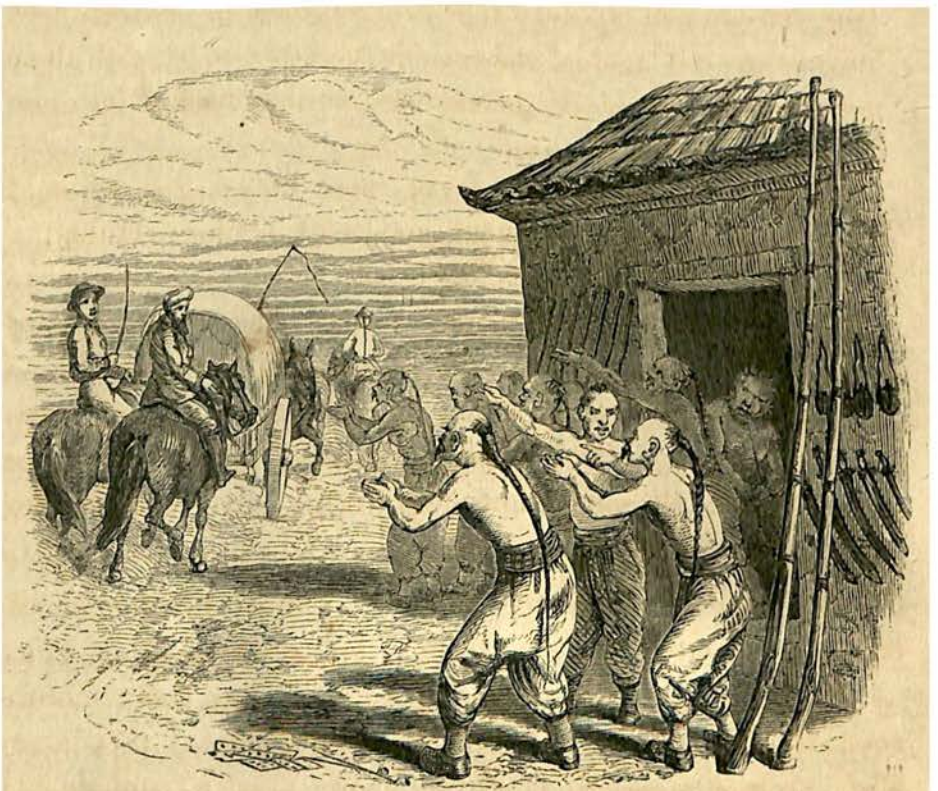
As we rode on, the whole surface of the plain we travelled over gave more conclusive evidence of the former existence of a temporary lagoon, in fragments of shells mixed up with the soil or thinly spread over the fields. Among them were entire specimens of the *lymneus stagnalis*, whose pleasure it is to bask in sunny nooks on the edges of pools, and a small bivalve shell somewhat resembling the *mactra*. Numerous saline incrustations and efflorescences met with, proved that the earth had not been disturbed for some months.

Not a loose stone was to be found anywhere for miles around us. Everything went to prove that many inches thick of mud are deposited over a wide tract of land on each side of the river when a strong east wind long prevails in the gulf, and drives the waters up the tributary channels until they rise beyond the banks. Then the flat nature of the country offering no impediment to their outward spread, an inundation takes place, the untoward consequences of which can only be remedied by the slow process of evaporation, and at its termination a fresh stratum of prolific soil is found imposed on that left a few years before.

From information picked up among the villagers, one is led to believe that these floods are becoming less frequent in occurrence and extent. There is, too, a corresponding diminution of the damage inflicted. This change is ascribable to some alteration in the bed of the Peiho, and also to the influence of the extensive bar at its mouth, as well as to a general elevation of the land towards the border of the gulf; for in the direction of Pau-ting-fu — the capital of the province of Chili—there is a vast permanent lagoon, thirty or forty miles in length, intersected by several streams or small rivers; and many of the people who reside in the Egyptian-looking huts fixed in the artificially-raised terraces of mud in this region, gave it as their opinion that the water in their neighbourhood is not so deep as it used to be, because they

could now cultivate the water-lily in places where the flood was over their heads a few years ago.

In the middle of the loneliest and wildest stretch, the meagre track led us close to a solitary cottage. We had noticed its dilapidated condition for some time. It had been built on the low ground, and showed such visible neglect, that we supposed it could only be some house of



Chinese Guard-house.

refuge for destitute wanderers over the dismal waste in wintry weather, or a shieling for strayed cattle on tempestuous nights; but we were agreeably surprised to find, on coming up to it, that it was a guard-room or small military station occupied by about a dozen soldiers, some of whom we could see sleeping on a couch inside, while others were walking about or playing cards on the limited square of cleared ground in front. A nearer inspection satisfied us

that the building was not really so bad as it appeared at a distance. The walls were of the usual materials — mud and grain stems, the windows were rather small, but the front was smoothly plastered and white-washed, for the better display of the arms. These were neatly fastened against it, and comprised about a dozen handy matchlocks hanging by their slings at one side of the doorway, and four swords, two red-plumed spears, and two fourteen or sixteen feet jingalls reared against the eave at the other side, with their complement of black bottle-like powder flasks in close proximity to each fire-arm.

As soon as they noticed us, these *pings* got up and made every demonstration of good will, smiling, laughing, and sawing the air with their clasped hands until we had passed on; and as often as we looked back we observed them still watching us in the most friendly manner. As they stood there, endeavouring to exhibit to us the sentiments of welcome and pleasure excited by our presence among them, we could not help asking ourselves whether these lusty fellows, whose bare necks and chests testified to their having attained the very highest physical development, had fled, fugitives from Enfield rifles, Armstrong guns, cavalry sabres, and Punjaub lances, but nine short months ago! Tall, powerful, and symmetrically built, they were fair specimens of the northern army sent to uphold the policy of the war party at Peking in 1860, and to resist the approach of Anglo-French *influences* and the *moral pressure* applied in the direction of the Northern Court. In spite of numbers, choice of defensible positions, a highly advantageous country, and brute strength—the quick movements of the invading force, their wonderful arms of precision, and the lightning darts of Sikhs and dragoons, proved too much for the bows and arrows of the once-dreaded Scythians, the light squibby matchlocks and fantastic 'whingers' of the so-called cavalry, and the jingalls,

rude spears, and badly-trained field-guns of the footmen. What appeared to be a formidable enemy too soon for their reputation became an ubiquitous one, nearly always in the right place at the wrong time, until it was acknowledged that catching Tartars was no easy matter. When caught, the difficulty seemed to be what to do with them.

It was impossible to avoid confessing that they were by no means destitute of that courage which would have enabled them to make a stout and a bold stand against an invading force armed and disciplined in the same manner as themselves. Their ignorance of our art of war, and the potent weapons we use, made them poor opponents.

Some of them, perhaps, were in front of the little group that watched us from the bleak-looking guard-house. They had been a warlike race in the middle ages, and had gone through many a stirring campaign in Central Asia under the leadership of the famous Madyes, *alias* Ogus Khan; they had burst into Media and slain Cyaxares; they had overrun Poland and Russia; they had penetrated Silesia, vanquished Duke Mieczzlaw, and desolated the whole of Hungary — in short, had considerably alarmed Europe. But in the nineteenth century the tables were completely turned. Even Genghis Khan with his innumerable hosts would not have had the shadow of a chance against the armament the allies brought into their middle kingdom. The Celestials had not a chance.

Cavalry they would wait for and meet, though they could not but find themselves wofully at a disadvantage and unable to inflict any injury: infantry they would slowly retire before—regardless, apparently, of the not very deadly volleys poured into their disorderly masses; but those dreadful cannon — those malignant genii hatched and perfected in the 'outer and tributary kingdoms,' they could not stand against, and afforded, by the pell-mell retreats they made, a most unequivocal test of the magical powers those machines were capable of exercising on the minds, if not the bodies, of

the valiant 'braves.' Possessed of all the qualifications necessary in the manufacture of first-rate soldiers — limbs and bodies the very models of health and strength — they seemed to be endowed with no small degree of patience under adverse circumstances, while capable of enduring much hardship without exhibiting its effects. How widely they contrasted in *physique* with the long, thin-legged, weak-armed, and narrow-chested Hindostances brought against them in the field — men, the very feeding of whom requires a commissariat, a transport, a retinue of servants, and other complicated arrangements sufficient, one would imagine, to smother any one department of an army in any country but their own.

How very differently would these Indians have behaved had affairs been reversed, and the Chinese been led against *them*, officered, drilled, and armed by Europeans! Since October last I have been strongly impressed with this idea, and am quite of opinion that the Northern Chinese—Mongols or Mantchus—are a match for any other Eastern people in war; and from what I have been able to see of them in the course of a good deal of rambling, I cannot help thinking that no better men for soldiers could be found — out of Western countries of course — were they enlisted young, trained, rationed, and taught the use of arms in a proper manner. Fed on coarse rice, the produce of the country, green vegetables, and an infinitesimal allowance of salt or fresh pork, the troops opposed to the allied armies to me looked fit for anything, could they have the advantages of discipline, good leading, and instruction in the handling of modern fire-arms.

No men could stand pain better than they did. Many I saw who had been wounded, and were found lying out in the fields, days afterwards, in the places where they had fallen, exposed during the day to the dreadful heat of the sun, parched and burnt up by thirst and sick from pain, with no creature near them to afford aid or consolation, held

on to life, and were free from any of those fits of despondency or grumbling which tend so much to retard recovery from serious injuries. When at last carried in to the temporary regimental hospital, not a complaint was made by them; on the contrary, the calmness and cheerful resignation they always displayed was most wonderful, and gave us the first favourable indications of their robust and hale constitutions and equable tempers.

Two men in particular I remember well, one of whom—a fine muscular fellow in the meridian of life and vigour—had three bullets in his body, and his thigh-bone smashed and splintered by another. He was discovered in a field at some distance from our camping-ground after the final contest near Peking, and though he had been lying out in this maimed condition for a whole day and night, without a morsel of food or a draught of water, he expressed no great emotion on being addressed, but merely signified his desire to indulge in a pipe of tobacco. While the bullets were being searched for and extracted from their lodgment—a most tedious, difficult, and painful operation when they have but recently entered, but far more so after the wounds have been exposed to the sun and dust, and the parts have begun to swell—though the probing must have caused the poor wretch the most excruciating agony it is possible to conceive, it was all borne with the greatest manliness, with scarcely a disturbed countenance, and without a murmur; and immediately after the necessary, but torturing work was over, the man looked lively and happy, and continued so until recovery.

He was a favourite with me, so I was often by the side of his stretcher: he was such a masculine good-humoured fellow, it did one good to see him, and grin and nod with him. He could not speak half-a-dozen words of our language. He puffed away at his little brass-bowled pipe, contentment depicted in every lineament of his bronzed face, and testified his admiration of the skill and attention of our young doctor

by continually jerking up his thumb, as much as to say he was a first-rate, or 'number one' man, and then pointed with joyful satisfaction to his rapidly healing limb—kept immoveable, easy, and comfortable in that wonderful fracture apparatus. An interpreter was sometimes available, and then interesting dialogues would take place, in which expressions of gratitude were frequent for the kindness and care shown him, of fear that he gave too much annoyance, and of a strong determination not to join the soldiers again, should he ever be able to return to his wife and children in their little home near the Great Wall, where one of his first acts, he vowed, would be to burn incense-sticks in grateful remembrance and acknowledgment of the benefits he had received from his thumb-friend, the doctor.

The other case was that of a man who had six lance-wounds in various places, but the worst, and, as we thought, the mortal one, was in the back, close to the shoulder-blade, where the lung had been perforated by the lance-point. Faint and weak from loss of blood while he spent a day and night in the sharp and irritating millet stubble, he was as firm and good-natured as the other sufferer, and whiffed away at the gently soothing weed as he sat doubled up for many days with pledgets and bandages to his wounds, constrained to assume and remain in that position in consequence of the hæmorrhage that took place from the lung on the slightest movement. He was quite as grateful and pleased as his companion, and like him he also recovered. Both returned to their homes from the Tien-tsin hospital, where a subscription had been thoughtfully got up, and a good round sum in dollars accumulated to pay their travelling expenses. What wonderful stories they will retail to the inhabitants of the little out-of-the-world villages they pass through, and how many long evenings will be spent among their old friends in recounting their adventures, and the hospitality they met with from the 'Men beyond the Seas!' The rations and the medical

comforts in hospital they can speak of, for they were liberally supplied with everything, and took as kindly at once to beer, porter, and rum, as if they had been initiated in childhood into the mysteries of indiscriminate tippling as practised in English cities. How they will astonish the rural population in those lonely spots away towards the border of the Supreme province, when telling of the manners, customs, and fighting qualities of the race which was to be decimated by their old-world tactics, defences, and weapons!

The history of the Empire affords many examples of the fidelity, wisdom, and courage that animated individuals and armies in ages gone by, when martial honours and achievements were held in greater respect and much more highly valued than in recent years. Some of the finest traits which ennoble the profession of arms in any age or country are still dwelt on in the eloquent narratives of historical and traditional writers, and serve to illustrate a period of chivalrous zeal and integrity not much behind that of the brilliant era of our own knights and crusaders.

Ma-yuen, for instance, who is recorded as having lived contemporaneously with our Saviour, must have been a valorous and high-spirited man, and the very model of a soldier. He displayed the greatest bravery and judgment in fighting and reducing to subjection the fiery Tartar tribes who sought to invade and plunder China, then under the rule of the Eastern Han dynasty, and in quelling the turbulent and rapacious Cochin-Chinese.

What can be finer or grander in the development of a true knight's aspirations than his frequently expressed sentiment, when entreated to retire from the dangers and fatigues of the camp and field, that 'the warrior should die on the desert battle-field, his noblest pall his saddlecloth; not in a chamber amidst weeping women!'

There is an identity of feeling between this Bayard-like speech and the cavalier turn of mind of one of the greatest

of modern novelists, when he says, deeply imbued with the spirit in which he wrote: 'It is the memory which the soldier leaves behind him, like the long train of light that follows the sunken sun. . . . When I think of death, as a thing worth thinking of, it is in the hope of pressing one day some well-fought and hard-won field of battle, and dying with the shout of victory in my ear—that would be worth dying for; and more, it would have been worth having lived for!'

The long accounts of Ma-yuen's expeditions against hordes of ruffians, and the brilliant acts of valour displayed by him in suppressing mutinies and rebellions, raised to oppose the authority of the Emperor Kwang-wu, are recited in thrilling tales written in fanciful language. One Chinese historian thus describes him as he appeared before the enemy at Kwanyang:

'Ma-yuen rode out dressed in an azure robe, his armour shining like quicksilver, his head surmounted by pheasant plumes in a white and costly helmet. His spear was eighteen feet long. He sat upon a horse with an azure mane, and thus placed himself in front of the battle.' How forcibly does this poetical description remind one of the fine old national song of 'Chevy Chase,' as it pictures the brave Douglas, whose career was closed in that desperate engagement, on the eve of attack:—

> Earl Douglas on a milk-white steed,
> Most like a baron bold,
> Rode foremost of his company,
> Whose armour shone like gold.

After many long years' service this warrior at last met a soldier's death, and realised his wish; for marching against the people of Wu-ling, in Hu-Kwang, he got hemmed in amongst the mountains during the severest months of winter by a greatly superior force, and, with his troops, suffered extreme privations. Another general was, with all haste, despatched to

his aid, but on inquiring he found the brave Ma-yuen no more, and his force prostrated with fever. The next Emperor, Ming-ti, did his memory justice, and rendered his own reign the more brilliant and happy by marrying the deceased general's daughter, who is celebrated as having been as talented and virtuous as her parent had been faithful and valiant.

In the ninth century, a Chinese general, Wang-sen, during the reign of He-tsung of the Suy dynasty, finding provisions failing him on a march, gave orders that all the old and feeble should remain behind in order to preserve the efficiency of the troops, and made a declaration that if any presumed to follow by disobeying this order, they should be put to death instantly. His aged mother accompanied the army, and was attended to by the general's brothers, who still ventured to carry her with them after the promulgation of the pitiable but necessary decree. In spite of their efforts at concealment, and their reliance on their brother's regard for his mother's life to exculpate them from punishment, Wang-sen found out the attempt to evade his order, and harshly reprimanded them, saying, 'Every army possesses laws; no army can exist without them; not to destroy you for your disobedience to my order is to render my army without laws.' The brothers, to screen themselves, urged the peculiar case of their mother; but the general was inexorable, became enraged, and issued an order to have her head cut off. The brothers begged to be put to death first, and the army, being powerfully moved in their behalf, interposed, petitioned, and finally procured a pardon for the three. This episode is given by the historian as an instance on the one hand of great fidelity, and on the other of a total want of it.

Did we wish to give an illustration of staunch adherence and an inflexible determination to die rather than become a traitor, we might refer to the fate of Sun-Kwei, a distinguished officer of the Emperor Chaou-tsung, who was taken prisoner by Kih-yung, a rebel and solicited to accept a com-

mission or command under him. He promptly refused, on the ground of its being dishonourable to him, and that as his troops were defeated, he had no alternative but to finish his duty—which was to die: for to receive an office under one opposed to the Emperor was impossible. Bribery and taunts being of no avail, Kih-yung in a violent passion gave orders that he should be sawn asunder. The executioners of this barbarous mandate could not make the saw enter the flesh. Sun-Kwei, railing, said: 'You dead dogs and slaves, if you would saw a man asunder, you should compress him between two planks; but how could you know it?' They took the hint, and, tying their victim between pieces of timber, carried out the horrid sentence; but he never relented, and died scornfully scoffing and jeering them.

But throughout the whole Chinese and Tartar history, even up to the present time, great cruelty appears to have been exercised towards prisoners; and it seems to have been a constant practice to put to death the principal officers after being captured. If they were able men, and would serve their captors, they might be spared; if not, they were destroyed in the most dastardly manner. Those who chose to die rather than forsake their party, are mentioned in history with honour under the appellation of Sze-tse, which serves to denote dying with an undeviating adherence to the line of duty.

Brute courage the troops opposed to the Peking expedition most assuredly possessed, and that in no small degree; for we have never been able to learn that any of the combatants made prisoners by the British between Pehtang and the capital ever made the slightest sign indicative of suing for mercy; and instances were frequent in which they died without betraying any signs of submission—even when resistance was perfectly hopeless. Had they done so, in all probability they would have been spared. At best they must have been nearly, if not all, conscripts drawn from the towns

and villages within and without the Great Wall—Chinese, Mongols, and Mantchus—the majority of whom were, doubtless, driven away from their homes and occupations to perform duties and undergo hardships with which they could scarcely be acquainted.

Chinese records inform us how unwillingly the people submitted to this treatment during a more warlike era than the present, for it is stated that in the reign of Shin-tsung of the Sung Dynasty, Gan-shih, his minister, formed a kind of militia, to which the inhabitants had so great an aversion that many of them cut off their fingers or hands to avoid being enrolled in the ranks. As in everything else that we see around us, the *trade* of arms in the country appears in a hopeless stage of antiquity; nothing remains but a worthless mass of unstable trumpery quite in keeping with the institutions to which it is appended. This unmistakable decay is not of the last hundred years, but appears to have commenced long before the Mantchu rule, and has been gradually paralysing the by no means bold attempts of the nation at rejuvenescence. Even in the days of a vigorous monarch of the present dynasty, famed for his love of those sports and pastimes which minister to warlike tastes and requirements, military expeditions were so promptly and successfully conducted that in his forty-ninth year he could boast to his friends and visitors: 'Since I ascended the throne I have directed military operations to a great extent. I have crushed rebels; I have taken possession of Formosa; I have humbled the Russians.' But a very mediocre testimony to the worth of the troops in his pay could be given. Kanghi, a Jesuit missionary, says — and, according to Le Comte, he said nothing but what was proper, as he did nothing but what was great—'They are good soldiers when opposed to bad ones, but bad when opposed to good ones.'

The *morale* of the army, if we can assure ourselves that

they may lay claim to anything of the sort, is bad; the leaders, unlike the gallant and chivalrous Ma-yuen, are reported to look out for and secure to themselves a good line of retreat well to the rear, ordering the men of small confidence and less judgment to the front; and when reverses come upon them, they are ready to lead their command from danger by a precipitate flight, though they are the first to receive personal degradation and ignoble punishment; while both officers and men are rationed and paid on such a scale as entirely to preclude the possibility of maintaining that condition and spirit necessary to enable them to cope with the soldiers of civilised countries.

Discipline they may be said to have none; and, taking them altogether, they are for service little better than an unwilling mob of pressed men—good or bad as may be—fighting ever with disgrace or decapitation before them, should they fail in obtaining victory; and with but little hopes of reward should they chance to be successful. Under a more genial and a more enlightened rule, the Chinese forces would, it may confidently be predicted, be very different, and, with the immense means of men and material at the disposal of the empire, they might be made to offer a very serious obstacle to the operations of an invading enemy.

We have long since lost sight, however, of our semi-nude friends—the last peep we managed to catch was of one brawny rascal who had mounted the thatched roof of the house to watch the way we went—and the sun is really consuming us. The past night's discomforts and unrefreshing sleep have made us feverish and fagged, with an almost unbearable thirst parching our throats. Not a drop of water is to be had in the ditches or hollows, and, unsuccessfully, we solicit the inmates of the mean habitations scattered sparsely to the right and left of our route, for a mouthful of anything to allay the more urgent cravings of our mouths.

The long level seems without water of any kind, and how the dwellers on it manage to exist without that essential of vitality, was more than we could guess in our dried-up state. They must have had water somewhere, but probably in such small quantity that they could not spare as much as we required. Nor was there anything growing for many miles but two species of heath—one resembling a good deal in hue and size our own heather, overtopped by a taller and more plentiful, but not so brilliant tinted, a variety. The travellers we met were few, and all bore some description of weapon, either sword, spear, or matchlock — whether intended for offence or defence we could not ascertain.

The pedestrians were of a very humble class, and carried little, if anything, worth protecting; while the one or two who passed us on nimble little donkeys could scarcely require the aid of the defiant-looking, wooden-handled sword that lay so snugly between the saddle flap and rider's thigh on the off-side—as their property consisted only of the shrivelled, over-weighted asses they bestrode, and a small bag containing a change of clothing (?), or some very trifling commodity that could be of no value to any but the most mercenary footpad in creation. They must be volunteers, we thought, wending their way to some rendezvous or depôt not far off, whence they would be conveyed, in bodies, to those provinces where robbery, murder, and devastation were rampant, there to swell the hosts of lukewarm scatterlings idling their lives away in frivolous skirmishes under the Imperial banners. They much resembled the misnamed troops at Shanghai and other places southward, in dress and arms; but it might turn out that they were only going as Government representatives to levy money from ill-fated villager or townsman, under instructions from some Mandarin or official, who had arrogated to himself unlimited powers.

We continue faintly clinging, or rather hanging, to our

saddles, gaspingly longing for a deep quaff of some icy beverage, with the unclouded sky and unmitigated sickly glare of the sun making more forbidding the landscape through which we try to push our way. We are guided only by the scathed stripe of baked earth deeply rutted on its edges by the narrow rims of native wheels, and turn at every opportunity into the shrivelled enclosures of the shreddy earthen tenements to beg or seize upon the first vessel of water we can discover; but the pauper-looking occupants seem as if they themselves were dying of thirst, and had been dried up to imitate mummies. Our eyes are painful and watery, from constant straining against the stupefying glare and a wind hot and biting as the Mistral, and our noses, fierily red, are not to be touched with impunity.

In all sincerity of spirit, and in far more urgent case, we exclaim with Cowper:

> 'O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade!'

What sacrifices would we not have made to have bargained with some Dryad for a tiny nook in the deepest recess of sylvan retreat, away from this shadeless tiresome scene!

A high branchless trunk of a tree rises before us like a lantern-pole, with a little roughly-constructed box, resembling a hen-cage, fixed at the top. We were about to pass it, in the conviction that it was intended for a beacon to guide travellers across the waste by night, and were dutifully placing such thoughtfulness of the local rulers to their credit, when, drawing near to its foot, we were disgusted to find the cage contained a human head—or the remains of one—black, decomposed, and crow-pecked. The horribly ghastly face looked directly down upon us through the bottom spars; for the skull, partially dragged out of the box by the carrion-birds, still kept hold of the plaited queue which was tied

round the pole to prevent the loathsome kites and crows tearing it away altogether before it had fallen to pieces. Awfully hideous was this memento of cruelty and barbarism — weather-worn, grilled, discoloured, and decayed, and threw a sullen darkness across the bright light of day as the vacant orbits seemed to rebuke the heedless travellers in language like this: 'For the sake of human nature, for the credit of those who frame laws, and those who enforce them, be merciful, and bury me under the earth, or compassionately hide me amidst the heath from the shuddering gaze of humanity. The maxims of our country are ever inculcating commiseration and charity towards our fellow-men: I am one of the Emperor's — our father's — children, and his regard for us is constantly in the mouths of his ministers, so that we may faithfully serve and duly revere him; our philosophers wisely and tenderly say, "in enacting laws, rigour is necessary; but in executing them, mercy." Behold!'

We are reminded that we have before us another phase — a most revolting one — of the strange inconsistencies which are to be noted by the observant dweller amongst the people of China, even in the most common-place matters. The laws — the penal code — are most sagaciously and mercifully framed for the administration of justice, and provision is made for all possible contingencies that may arise to retard its course — mildness and equity being ever paramount. Here justice, and life, and death were concerned, and death triumphed. Why? Because destruction, cruelty, and torture were, perhaps, more convenient and better suited to the practice of the magistrates than the humane but antagonistic theories of the code.

We could not understand why this display of Asiatic law should have been made in such an obscure place, so we at once referred to Ma-foo for an explanation. The unfeeling man must have thought we were joking, for it was some time

before his old withered countenance could be brought into a condition of steadiness sufficient to allow him to chuckle out that the wretch whose head hung over us had been a *Pi-lang*—by which Canton word, that he had picked up somewhere during his missionary rambles, we understood the man to have been a thief or pirate, as *lally loon*, another Canton word for thief, may be derived from the 'Ladrone' of

A Warning to Robbers.

Portuguese notoriety, and that he had suffered the extreme penalty of the law for, in all probability, some insignificant misdemeanour perpetrated near the spot.

We had not gone many hundred yards before we came on another, and another, each more disgusting than the other. We appeared to have got on to an old-fashioned Bagshot or Blackheath, so fearfully did these relics remind one of highwaymen and gibbets—for Ma-foo declared all to be the heads of robbers. This attendant of ours, though a

Roman Catholic, and therefore coming under the designation of Christian, had the same want of sympathy and indifference to human life as his countrymen generally display. One need go no further than to the beggar class for proof of this; crowds of beings in all the harrowing stages of starvation throng the streets, dying, and often dead, at the doors in the busiest thoroughfares, and their fellow-men pass them by as if they saw them not. Certainly the quality of mercy is not much strained to economise life — nor, from what we have witnessed, can we vouch for the existence of this great attribute in the slightest degree in the leaven of the Chinese nature; nor is the desire to foster or awaken it in the hearts of the many who might minister to perishing creatures at all to be imputed to those who represent the patriarchal system of government; on the contrary, any movement to alleviate distress, during the rigours of a severe winter, we were sorry to observe, obtained little favour from the authorities.

A superabundant population, teeming in every nook and cranny, selfishly striving to eke out as comfortable a lifetime as possible, and to accumulate wealth in the least time compatible with security, is always extruding the unlucky and unthrifty from its mass, and throwing them out to drift about as they best may. To steal and to beg are the only alternatives left—the former leads to a nearer termination perhaps than the other. 'Heads or tails' is the sentence; the first most frequently turns up, and the culprit is compelled to part with his headpiece, tail and all—and is hurried off to execution a few hours after the decision against him, without a tithe of the protection or inquiry bestowed on a pickpocket in England.

When amputation of the tail chances to be the sentence, the offender is irrevocably fixed in beggardom, far beyond the possibility of extrication or the reach of sympathy; a lost man, in fact, shunned by everyone, a wretch to whom

death would be a gladdening relief. A Chinese beggar's vocation is not the hale and hearty gaberlunzie independency of the English vagrant. From the moment he is cut off from labour, decapitation and starvation haunt him, without a prospect of escape, though this he attempts with desperate cunning and extraordinary boldness, which did not quite receive our approbation when we happened to suffer by them. How I beseeched Astræa, the Goddess of

Chinese Beggars.

Justice, to deliver up to me the only coat I possessed, with watch, papers, and pocket contents accompanying it—no portion of which did I ever see again; or the hard-hearted rascal who purloined them from my tent, when to replace them were almost impossible; and how I ranted and raved on that cold winter's night, when, having constructed a cosy little fireplace in a dingy Tien-tsin room, and with no

small amount of labour raised a tall chimney to carry off the products of combustion into a narrow lane at the gable-end of the house, I had the chimney knocked down for the second time; and the bricks carefully removed to some unknown locality! My astonished servitor reported the daring conduct of the unknown parties, who afterwards, not satisfied with what they had already taken, twice emptied the grate of its burning contents by the aperture leading to the outside of the room. How many nights did I not lie awake watching the vacant hole, with all sorts of curious things rigged up to tumble down at the slightest touch of the scoundrel, the mean-souled Prometheus, and kept a revolver near my bed in a state of readiness; but for weeks neither friend nor pilferer ventured near between the going down and rising of the sun! A few days afterwards, when riding through the suburb of the city, I saw three newly-decollated heads embellishing the roadside, and my heart relented, for I imagined that they were the remains of our late visitors, and from that hour the weapon of retribution appeared no more at my bedside.

CHAPTER V.

THE HUNDRED-SPIRITED BIRD — ANCIENT RUSTIC — INEXPENSIVE COSTUMES — THE INN AT CHE-TUR — MID-DAY HALT — TARTAR PONIES — SUPERIORITY OF MULES — MANDARIN'S TRAVELLING EQUIPAGE AND ESCORT — NON-OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY IN CHINA — THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS.

ABOUT eighteen miles from our last night's quarters the country became dotted here and there with meagre squares of meadow land, on which the diminutive black goat of the country, or a scraggy, sore-backed donkey, grazed in peaceful comfort; while sundry hares, smaller and lazier than our own, scampered with easy pace from the path of the intruders to seek a nest in the nearest ling-bush. 'Far in the downy cloud,' regardless of the sun's intensity in the fierceness of the July midday, the little North China skylark, the *Pehling*, or 'Hundred-spirited bird,' 'blithesome and cumberless' as its congener in our own land, though imperceptible to the eye, inspiringly threw out its gushing song with the most lively *abandon* — the thrilling melodious gusts descending from the heavenly promenade like those of

> 'A high-born maiden in a palace tower,
> Soothing her love-laden soul, in secret hour,
> With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower.'

Soon the glad song drives away one-half of our fatigue as we plod on, eager for the first inn, where breakfast may be got ready in some way or other.

An old man is at work in a grass-plot cutting the short thin herbage, and as our road is not altogether well marked out, we cross over to inquire. Poor old fellow! he is in a

great state of unfeigned alarm at our sudden appearance, and makes an attempt to run away, but a second thought convinces him that his weak limbs could not carry him beyond the field, so he stands still, ready to supplicate for pity. He is quite unable to answer the questions put to him, till reassured by Ma-foo that we intend no harm, and then he gathers confidence to speak, though still uncertain as to our motives. Purblind and all but naked, the skin

Grass-cutting.

covering the visible skeleton head, gathered in wrinkled creases around his neck and face, which is of the colour, and not unlike the texture, of a hard-worn, deeply-stained saddle; but the dearly-cherished tail, though still pendent from the crown of his venerable occiput, had dwindled away to the thickness of a whip-cord of silvery strands coiled round his brow. His morning's work lay near, in little heaps of fodder placed every ten or twelve yards over half an acre of ground,

and the implement employed bore such traces of novelty in its construction and design that we could not forbear taking a rough outline of it, and noting its name, which sounded, as nearly as we could write it, like *tsu-sa*. To a little basket of willow twigs, open at one side, was fixed a shovel handle with a thin sharp blade of iron along the front or open side. This handle was held in the left hand, while the right one swung the basket and blade against the grass, cutting and carrying it away at the same stroke by means of two cords tied to the back rim of the tray and looped round each end of another wooden handle in the right hand. The expert way in which he wielded this contrivance, and the quantity of grass cut with it in a few minutes, after we had overcome his scruples and got him again to work, showed that the inventor had economy both of time and labour in view when he introduced it.

Soon after, we saw scattered groups of people toiling and scraping the crust of the land in an entire state of nudity—the most humble class of peasantry we had seen in China, and as we passed close to them, and could not avoid gazing at such miserable slaves, they betrayed no signs of bashfulness, but continued their unprofitable work as if no strangers had been near. The villages were becoming more plentiful, but still were raised on tall hillocks, and as decrepid as any we had seen. The starving inmates came out to look at us, some of the males and nearly all the children—if appearances were to be trusted—happily exempt from tailors' bills and the fluctuations of fashion, their bodies unconstrained and without a covering save that afforded by the thickly-incrusted dirt that had been collecting on and sheathing their skins since the ceremonious washing inflicted on them, according to custom, a few days after birth. Not unfrequently, however, some few could be observed *clad* in a quadrangular sort of tucker suspended around the neck by a cord at one corner, and bound close

to the middle by the opposite corners, but barely covering the front of the half-civilised beings who jumped and squatted about their doors. In these apologies for a costume one or two pockets were stuck, in which were carried any trifling necessaries a Chinaman of the lower orders may require.

About one o'clock exhausted nature felt revived, and hopes began to be stirred up as we ascended the steep side of the embankment on which the streaky road stumbled into the exalted but rough hamlet of Che-tur, where we found an inn in every respect better than that of last night. The rooms, though in miserable repair, felt cool and sheltered, the thermometer only indicating 96° in the shade. The domestic arrangements of the establishment were knocked into endless confusion by our presence, and by the embarrassment imposed on its servitors through the impetuous crowd of villagers who thronged the place to immobility, and made ingress or egress for any but ourselves all but impossible. Already we began to be objects of curiosity and speculation to these simple-minded people, who had never before seen the face of European, and were lost in wonder at everything about us. Two willing little boys—more active and acute than any of their age and class we ever saw at home, waited upon us, and, by dint of great exertion and anticipated *cumshaw*, found us water enough for a bath, and a half gourd-shell to souse it about with.

This, with copious draughts of hot tea, and a brief nap on a mat couch, thoroughly refreshed us, and it was an agreeable addition to our satisfaction to see the animals on which so much depended digesting large mangers-full of chopped straw and bran with undiminished spirits or appetites. But our own meal—our breakfast—was still unapproachable, as the *cuisine* boasted of nothing likely to please our outlandish palates, except eggs. Not having become sufficiently accustomed to their pleasing aroma, hunger's urgent appeals

failed to entice us to depend on them, inasmuch as we were cognisant of the existence of a staple commodity, lurking in a basket which had been carefully packed up for service in the depths of the travelling cart, and which offered far stronger attractions to our delicate tastes; so on Frankfort sausage we fell back, and what with its excellent flavour, its delectable taste, and its unimpeachably substantial qualities, aided by capacious bowls of pearly rice—each pellicle as distinct and clear in outline and individuality as the light flakes of snow which the wintry sky thinly scatters over this intemperate region—washed down by repetitions of steaming cups of the national beverage, such a repast was made as rather amazed our youthful waiters, who were considerably bewildered at our foresight and unexampled fastidiousness in carrying about our own supplies and the articles necessary for their serving up, refusing the dainty fare of the house, and objecting even to the assistance that might be found in the chopsticks which they laid before us. Many visitors ascended the two little steps at the door to watch the movements of two such curious mortals; and when the feast had really commenced, a rush was made by about a dozen of the most obtrusive, who could contain their unruly inquisitiveness no longer, but fairly stuck themselves over the table, staring into our faces with unwinking eyes, or following the motions of spoon or fork like starving dogs. The organ of smell required that they should be expelled without delay, and it must be told, to their advantage, that after the first intimation of their being unwelcome, they did not again enter the room, but pertinaciously posted themselves outside in every corner from whence they could obtain the faintest glance of ourselves or shadows.

Nature demanded another hour's rest to overcome the effects of this unusual repletion; so we stretched out again on the couch with all the ease and contentment so comfortable and simple an entertainment could bestow, under

the gentle *surveillance* of sundry primly dignified Tartar beauties, whose painted faces, surmounted by clusters of bright-coloured flowers, looked down smilingly on us from detached scrolls on the wall, as with slender tapering fingers, armed with the boatswain's-whistle nail protectors, they becomingly wave the graceful fan, or with silken cord restrain the playful gambols of toyish poodles who are bent on amusing themselves with the gay tassels suspended to the toes of their thick, narrow-soled canoe-like shoes, quite unmindful of the interspersed specimens of exquisite calligraphy surrounding them, inculcating some trite moral Confucian aphorism, favourite saying, or good wish.

Well restored by four in the afternoon, we again got under way, and with a long twenty miles before us, and the fag-end of a hot wind blowing in our faces, left a staring crowd in the middle of the village street as we descended to the plain beyond.

Four miles an hour rapidly brought us into a more fertile country, with large tracts of meadow-land, on which grazed troops of what are generally called Tartar ponies, but which are, in all likelihood, bred on this side of the Wall,—tended by men with long whips, whose business seemed to be principally confined to smoking, and now and then adjusting the rope-hobble that bound two or three of each animal's legs together to prevent their straying too far. Among the droves were some of the best ponies we had yet seen in the North; great, strong, 'tousey tykes,' as uncouth and rugged members of the *genus equinum* as could well be found anywhere else in the world; but as hardy, strong, and handy as they seemed coarse-bred. The so-named Tartar pony is as unlike that in use in South China, Manila, or Japan, as can be imagined by those who have not seen it, and differs as widely from the Amoy and Canton breed as the rough, old-fashioned farmer's Galloway does from the Shetland or Dartmoor pony; the former of which it certainly

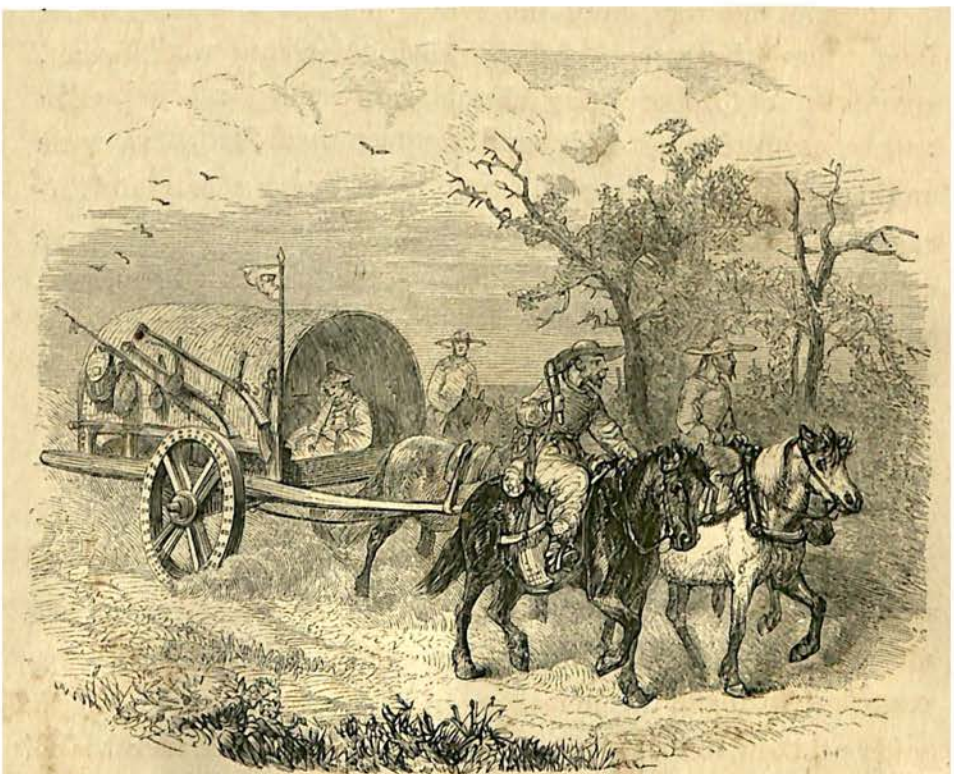
favours in more respects than one. Great, out-of-proportioned head, indicating nothing but the most surly stubbornness or vice, with the eyes almost concealed beneath an excess of long matted forelock; a thin neck, roofed by a tangled mane undisturbed by comb or brush since the animal first assumed a quadrupedal existence; a low, thick, straight shoulder, from which extends a lengthy, concave, sharp-ridged back to the massive bony haunches which stand out like two buttresses, leaving the loins narrow and yawning, and a croup salient and rude, reaching to a tail for all the world like a protracted muddy swab; while the limbs, strong but rigidly perpendicular to the very ground, are all but hid in masses of unkempt or untrimmed hair. Beneath this ungainly and unprepossessing exterior, however, lies the staunchest spirit and most unflinching endurance that can belong to the species, and which enables this much-neglected servant to perform work and achieve long journeys that perhaps no other animal could accomplish on the same meagre innutritious food. Many stories are told of them and the long-continued jog-trot pace they can sustain with a heavy lumbersome Chinaman on their backs, weighing, perhaps, sixteen stones, and the pony measuring but from twelve to fourteen hands high at the utmost. The Russian courier from Peking to Kiakhta, a frontier town of the Russian dominions—a distance of about 500 miles—not long ago used to ride one pony there in twelve days, and, after two days' rest, return in fifteen. In getting away through heavy ground they are decidedly first-rate, and nothing could exceed the ready way in which they shuffled off with their riders when chased by our dragoons in the early part of the campaign. Bearing no visible signs of any attempts having been made to improve the breed—and it may be doubted if what we consider improvement would much tend to enhance its value for the purposes to which it is made subservient by the Chinese, and at the same time preserve

those qualities which endow it with such a remarkable aptitude for withstanding fatigue and exposure to the weather on the most unfavourable sort of forage—we see the little brute now as it was in all probability in the dreaded days of the Tartar cavalry, when, becoming too redundant for their own comfort on the barren steppes or neglected plains, and dreading famine, or prompted by the prospect of pillage and the glory of conquest, the equally hardy and obstinate Mongol or Mantchu, mounted on these ursine solipedes, broke through all obstacles, and covered countries richer and more civilised than their own, with havoc and ruin. But though gifted with so well-adapted and serviceable an animal, the Chinese very much prefer the hybrid, obtained by crossing the pony with the never-worn-out ass, and in this they show their usual discrimination in matters pertaining to domestic economy. Not so tall as the Spanish mule, stronger built than either the Persian or Turkish, the North China mule is incomparably better-constitutioned, more robust, and livelier-paced than either, and in the hands of a Chinese muleteer is as docile and obedient as a Liverpool dray-horse, without requiring a tenth part of the care and attention bestowed on the more favoured breeds; and their immunity from disease and the effects of over-work being greater than with the ponies, their value is considerably increased, sometimes even threefold. So much, indeed, is this animal preferred for riding purposes, that Mandarins select mules for ease and convenience rather than ponies, and scarcely a team of draught cattle can be met that has not either one or two of these mongrels in the most important corner of the gear, as a powerful aid and incentive to the other beasts.

The road or path we were tracking out was still a lonely one, and did not seem to be much frequented, notwithstanding the little footways that at decreasing intervals led off in various directions; so that we had but trifling variation. Sometimes a man would pass us trundling along the peculiar

tchou-dza, or wheelbarrow, with a load on it large enough for a one-horse cart, the perspiration rolling off his face and weather-browned body in mimic streams without affecting his strength in the most trifling degree, while his tail was put to a very laudable use in binding a piece of rag around his forehead and affording support to a browband with a lot of bristling rushes inserted in its structure immediately over the eyebrows, to protect his eyes from the sun's glare. Sometimes the same kind of vehicle would be wheeled labouringly along by an old faded individual whose worldly all, consisting of his small-footed wife, and perhaps a child, with an agglomeration of duds, and fragments of furniture, were packed on in a manner sufficient to indicate a distant 'flitting,' and two or three young people walking alongside, one of whom was certain to be carrying arms, gave one an idea of the strength of his establishment. As the afternoon progressed the country improved; the villages near us, frequently shrouded in a whirlwind of dust, exhibited more taste and care, and away in the far distance, afloat in the drifting sea-like mirage, they towered up pleasantly among trees at close intervals, looking green and fresh as islands in a tropical ocean; but the ready san-pans still hung about them in case of need. Before the sun had touched the horizon we encountered a large convoy of some dozen carts, carrying each in front a small triangular flag with its wavy border bound by red, and in the centre an inscription denoting the name and rank of some mandarin, their interiors crowded with all sorts of miscellaneous articles; and in some of these rude conveyances lolled great obese phlegmatic Chinamen, who slept, ate, and lived in their jarring apartments for very many days, for they had travelled from a place in Kwantung (the old name for Liautung), which they informed us was about 300 miles distant. Goodness only knows how they contrived to come so far without injury, in such torturing clumsy carts. Large square blocks of wood coarsely mortised

and bound together to the unwieldy shafts, formed a body of some 10 or 12 feet in length, from the sides of which sprang a semicircular roof of cane matting, to shelter the occupant from sun, rain, and dust; the whole imposed on a massive wooden axletree which had low, nail-studded, primitive wheels fixed at each end, and revolved on the springless body, instead of the wheels on it. Above, below, on the sides and behind, inside as well as outside, the most outlandish



Mandarin's Travelling Carriage.

things were fastened, and special regard was had to lances, scimitars, and matchlocks, that exhibited their threatening figures in the most conspicuous and ready places.

A large concourse of brawny equestrians loitered about while the weary animals in the carts were being refreshed by a scanty supply of muddy water, a few lazily hanging over the necks of their ponies, or sartoriously squatted on the ground watching their steeds as they were trying to rid their mouths

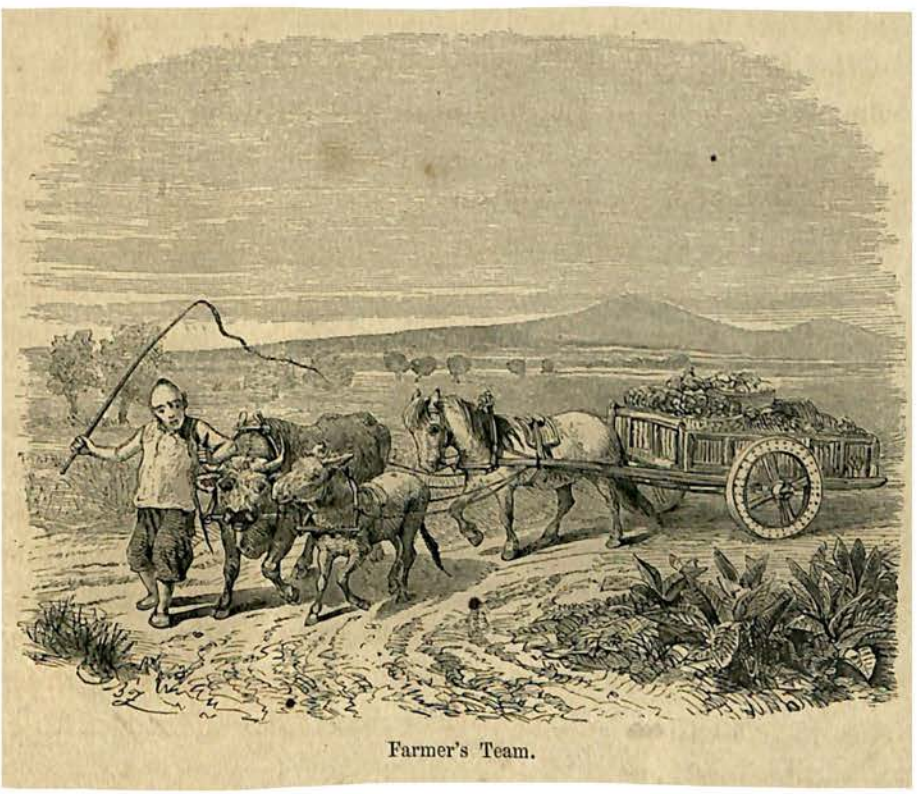
of the sharp-edged bit before cropping the enticing herbage that encircled the watering-place. To every saddle was hung its matchlock or sword: the first, with its muzzle stopped up by a plug of red horsehair, was suspended by the sling to the high peak of the crupper, while the sabre in a leathern scabbard depended by two loops from the side, in which position it might hang without inconvenience to its proprietor.

These wanderers were the finest men we had seen for a long time—tall and loosely formed, their muscular bodies enveloped in the ordinary thin blue or white cotton jacket and trousers that barely served to cover them; their feet and ankles buried in wide gaiter-like socks which served also to contain the lower portion of the legs of their trousers; their necks were quite exposed, and their heads surmounted by straw hats wider in the brim than any Spaniard's sombrero, from under which their massive faces, covered with dust in patches, in others as brown as sepia, looked out upon our small party with an expression of stupid curiosity and wonder quite characteristic of these country folks, plainly indicating that though their eyes were sluggishly at work, their minds had little to do in speculating about us. Their masters in the waggons, during the whole of our halt and attempted conversation with sundry members of the rough-and-ready escort, never relaxed the rigid twist of stern incognisance into which they had thrown their physiognomies as soon as we came in sight, though their smothered inquisitiveness must have punished them severely. Sometimes we made certain that a movement was required to ease their tiresome position, which entailed a sudden projection forward in our direction, when, perhaps, they may have caught a glimpse of our boots or a squint at the visible portions of our saddles, though their stoical full-moon faces betrayed them not. Sometimes their official, buttoned, extinguisher-looking summer hats required adjustment either on their heads or the sides of

the roof, when something very much akin to a furtive stare at our faces was undoubtedly attempted, though their stolidly fixed eyes were gazing vacantly before them in less than a second afterwards. Their arrogant pride would not sanction their manifesting the faintest approach to civility for the gratification of their all but irrepressible prying wonder, and seeing their desire to be left to themselves in the pseudo-dignity they had borrowed for the nonce, we had no inclination to thrust ourselves upon their consideration, even at the expense of losing information that might have been of some value to us on the unknown road that lay between us and our destination. The beasts drank their water, the lusty cavaliers tightened the white leathern thongs that served as girths, pulled up their socks, and pushed down their pantaloon legs deeper into them, and the cart teams jerked the wrenching squeaking wheels, or rather the grating timber axle, into its wonted circuit; two or three shouts of encouragement were bellowed at the leaders, and then the whole caravan was in motion, and the horsemen mounted; so, without a word of greeting at meeting or parting, we took our opposite courses — we still to the north-east, they to the south-west. Their first contact with Europeans was over, and their interest in the rencontre was wofully damped by their ignorant vanity, closing their mouths and blinding their eyes to what they were at perfect liberty, for aught we cared, to speak of or look at.

Anon we came upon village carts laden with some vegetable productions, and drawn by asses, oxen, ponies, or mules, or a member of each class clubbed together in front of the slow-moving noisy carriage; and — could it be possible! — old men in open fields ploughing on Sunday, and ploughing, too, more frequently with an ox, a pony, and an ass, than any other species of beast; the three working away as cheerfully and earnestly as if the Almighty had never insisted that the race of man should keep holy the Sabbath day, in the fourth

commandment, and as if Moses, in Deuteronomy, twenty-second chapter and tenth verse, had not declared: 'Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together;' the latter, perhaps, furnishing an additional proof that those from whom this people descended withdrew themselves from the main stock before the institution of a day of rest by the Prophet in the wilderness, by which many writers attempt to account for the non-observance of this day in China.



Farmer's Team.

Fo-hi, the founder of the empire,—whom some people suppose to be Noah,—they imagine, retired to China in his old age, and there, divinely begotten as he was, he taught his subjects to build towns and live in them, giving them prime ministers and magistrates to manage their affairs and preserve tranquillity, inventing music and the art of dressing, to make them happy and comfortable; bestowing on his nameless people names; introducing the custom of sacrificing six different kinds of animals at the solstices, in order to ease their

consciences and foster feelings of veneration; giving them also a symbolical mode of writing for their special edification, and a code of laws which his clever eyes and pen enabled him to copy from a tablet on the back of a post-diluvian monster that he had the good luck to become intimate with for a few seconds, as it rose to breathe from the bottom of a lake, by the side of which he chanced to be strolling. We have often wondered why, when he gave them all this, and made them such an industrious lot of creatures, he did not allow them an interval of rest or recreation oftener than once or twice a year; for he showed, by his omission of this boon, a total disregard or unwarrantable ignorance of the truths contained in the prediction that 'All work and no play would make John Chinaman a dull boy.'

No, he gave them everything else necessary but a proper day for unbending their bows, though he made a very close approach to it when he presented them the symbolical diagram of the '*Yang* and *Yin*'—'darkness and light, rest and activity' —to portray the reciprocal order of things as they exist in Nature,—one of these dual principles, the *Yang* or male, governing the affairs of Nature for six days, then ceasing when the *Yin* or female principle came into operation for the next six. What a pity he did not allow only one day to elapse between each change! What a difference it might have made in the conservative routine habits of the people!

As the sun began to droop in the west, and to spread around him the resplendent hues of a summer sunset, the bold dark outlines of the fine range of mountains we had caught a transitory glance of yesterday came out in full prospect, as if produced by the startling agency of a magic-lantern. We experienced a renewed sense of joy it would be hard to describe. As the raging orb of day gently slid down behind them, a heavenly breeze from their majestic tops stole soothingly and benignantly below into the dark

glens and the plain beyond, cheering everything animated, and adding new beauties to the already quiet grandeur of the gloaming in the ever-varying atmospherical changes attending the decline of a fine evening.

Black, bare, and rifted into all sorts of jags, pinnacles, towers, and minarets, hustled in heaps, or regularly posted in long chains, treeless and heatherless, they held out their sombre welcome to us, we were certain, after our red-hot and wearisome life on the most palling of all unrumpled levels, with more fervour and congenial spirit than we ever expected from the purple Bens of the Western Highlands. Liberty, life, light, and strength seemed to revel on the loftiest ridges of that serrated margin, and looked boldly and defiantly towards the insipid, sickly earth, spreading out its languid surface far to the right and behind and before. Surely the uncontaminated air that sustains and invigorates the soul of freedom, and exalts the nature of man, is concentrated in those regions that draw nearest to the clouds, where the enervating breath of the Mistral and the venomous swelter of the plain never come; where every movement tends to independence and masculine thought, and every inspiration sends an additional stream to the river of life!

The distant sight of these revered natural monuments, and the alternating character of the country between them and us, seemed to curtail the journey. We were unconsciously passing through a neat little avenue of willow trees that skirted along the bank of a newly-made aqueduct, and opened on a pretty, toyish stone bridge (*vide* willow-pattern plate), that rose in a sharp convexity over a pool, in which a number of farmers' ponies were being watered, — greatly to the discomfort of a flock of ducks, whose white plumage was undergoing a thorough soiling from the muddy splashes,—before we became aware of the presence of a curious crowd that had gathered on the parapet of the bridge to gossip, after the toils of the day. They now rapidly fell back as we advanced, and

allowed us to get a peep of some snug little cottages, with gardens overhanging the sides of the pond, in which grew a profusion of pink and red hollyhocks, and the fan-spreading, lake-coloured amaranth, so much admired by the country people.

CHAPTER VII.

VILLAGE OF TCHUNG-WAH-KOW — RIVER PEHTANG — UNPLEASANT REMINISCENCES — A DISAGREEABLE IMMERSION — ADVENTURES OF A NIGHT — A DREADFUL DORMITORY — HARD TIMES — TOWN OF QUI-TOOSA — INN AT FUNG-TAI — BAD ACCOMMODATION — FELLOW-LODGERS' EXCESSIVE CURIOSITY — REFRESHING SLEEP.

WE were in the small but well-built village of Tchung-wah-kow, on the banks of the Pehtang hô, as it is named by us, but to which the people here give the lengthy title of Che-tau Yoon-leang hô. Ascending the narrow, steep street, which was lined by tastefully-finished houses on each side, we descend again to the little jetty, where the ferry-boat is waiting to convey us across the sluggish yellow river, flowing noiselessly and smoothly on, undisturbed by many junks, and between low clayey embankments here and there, but more often spreading over a large patch of land, on which grows in thick luxuriance the tall lazily-swaying reed (*Phragmites communis*), so useful in this part of the world for the manufacture of matting and in forming an under-thatch on the roofs of the better classes of houses. As usual, the alarm had been sounded, and a mob of old and young, males and females, hurried out to see us,— the most obstreperous of the masculine gender crushing and crowding around ere we had time to transfer our cart, ponies, and mules, from the ground to the barge. A goodly number of the unconscionables even found their way on board and accompanied us across, in spite of the exertions and protestations of the ferrymen, who were well aware that remuneration from such a slippery lot they stood no chance of receiving; but the latter were so numerous and so nimble that they escaped through their fingers like

quicksilver; and, as darkness was rolling in upon us, the vagabonds were allowed to have their own way and stare at us until their eyes ached again, while the boatmen poled the craft to the other side. The river here runs from north to south, and is about twenty or twenty-five yards in width, and only about eight or ten in depth, giving off a branch to the eastward,—the Hwang-shing hô,—on which, above the lofty reeds, the slender masts of a few light san-pans could be observed in the dusk; the course of both being only visible for a short way in the dense mass of green vegetation fringing their sides. As we stood on the shaky boards, trying to pacify our affrighted ponies and prevent their breaking off the deck into the current, and as we surveyed the quiet scene in which we were moving,—the lonely village,—the deep shade of the old willow trees made deeper by the approaching night,—the delicate rustling of the reeds as they nodded their heads from the tangled coverts to the evening wind,—and the stridulous unceasing chirp of the large green grasshoppers, with the guttural croaking of toads and frogs from the marshy ground,—we were reminded of this river where it opens out its mouth to the waters of the Gulf and the town of Pehtang,—slimy, wretched, and rotten, the place of abominable smells and Stygian pools,—as they made our acquaintance not much more than a year ago.

Horrible and unsolicited retroversion of memory! Why do we find ourselves again endeavouring against our will to recall to our mind's eye, and with full olfactory vividness, the dismal vicissitudes of a night of misery when landing some time about

'The wee short hour ayont the twal,'

in the pitchy darkness of a moonless autumnal morning, at that loathsome accumulation of everything vile, on a sort of jetty that led from the gun-boats to the miry streets? Amid the glare of torches, with horses kicking, mules scampering away without

their keepers, Japanese ponies engaged in fiendish-like combats with each other in the boats, on shore, or even in the very bed of the river, and a thundering Babel of sounds, in which the stentorian voices of tars could be always distinguished as they shouted in anger or surprise: 'Now, Bill, make this 'ere pony fast by an 'itch round 'is tail, to stop 'is darned 'eadway.'—'Oh! blow me if this haint a grampus or a hold shark that I've gettin' 'old on, for he's been and tuk hold wi's teeth on my dickey; and blow'd if he'll let go on ony 'count!' At that hour, one of our party, poor B., was too much perplexed by the crush and the stunning confusion of sights and sounds to hear behind him the warning bellow of a son of Neptune, who was getting the worst of it in a wrestling encounter with an hysterical bull. Finding his grip gradually giving way as he was dragged along, he managed to scream out, 'Mind yere starn, sir!' Hard a starboard and make all sail, sir, or—*or* he'll run you down, sir!' My friend found that

> 'All too late the advantage came,
> To turn the odds of deadly game,'

for he was without ceremony hurled by the said animal into the water and semi-glutinous matter that lay near the shore. This stubbornly refused to give him up until aided by two brawny mariners, one of whom declared, as they pulled him out, in a sort of half sympathising, half joking way, that he looked 'more like a dirty night off Cape 'orn than a nice sodger officer;' and the other exclaimed, as the besmeared and saturated individual gave him a delicate whiff of the Sinensian bouquet, with which he had been invested in this inglorious bath: 'Oh! may I never be piped down to dinner, Jim, if he don't smell worse nor the bilge-water of an old Indeyman!'

To remedy such a mishap was beyond the present resources of the bewildered and benighted group, and to touch even the hem of his garment was to become tainted in

such a degree that every idea of comfort was banished for ever after. A random suit, better adapted for the halcyon promenades of Regent Street or the Park, than the turbulent fagging of service, stuck by the merest chance or oversight in the corner of a very elfin-like portmanteau, quite up to the regulated restriction as regarded weight, was donned during the middle watches of the night; after which installation in '*Mufti*' we agreed to go in search of our, until then, kind friend and benefactor, Somnus, on the top of what must have been, at no very remote period in the world's history, a Chinese dung-heap, not many yards from the odoriferous river.

Ugh! shall I ever succeed in forgetting it, or can the constant use of the most potent disinfecting chemical or mechanical agents manage to renovate, fumigate, or purify my sense of smell? I fear not; and, as for sleep, it completely deserted and betrayed me! The most morbid and uproarious night-mare that ever punished the indulgence of a dyspeptic valetudinarian in underdone pork chops, with heavy plum-pudding and porter as a finishing course at midnight, can hardly be compared to the agonies I endured in my dewy, but far from flowery, bed in the concavities of two inverted pack-saddles, jammed firmly into the fermenting stuff we had congregated on, flanked by a trunk to keep off the dogs, and with a valise for a pillow to the head, that rested as uneasily as if it had been wearing half-a-dozen or a dozen crowns. Spasmodic dreams of descending by precarious ropes at a terrific rate some one of the deep street openings into the sewers of London, with the very pressing and laudable object in view of saving some partially-known being who had fled there for safety from a mad ox, and of having a handkerchief tied smotheringly tight round one's mouth to prevent suffocation by the poisonous gases usually generated in these places, were interrupted, as I was awakened to a full appreciation of my plight, by two

unruly steeds, animated by the most unfriendly sympathies, engaged in the peculiar attack and defence made use of by these equine gladiators, and striving to produce the greatest number of bites and murderous contusions over my prostrate body.

At another time, it was an unfortunate — or rather fortunate — pony that had escaped out of the river's bed to expel us from ours; and no sooner was it driven away by huge fragments of hard-baked, strong-scented mud, thrown with the undeviating precision of desperate men, and we had again settled down to another incubus, than a string of mixed animals, led by a liberty-loving mule and pursued by a host of those nondescript, chupattie-eating ghorrawallahs, would dash over us in wild disorder, planting their feet under them so freely and firmly, that to attempt to give anything like an idea of the impression they made on our minds, as well as on our limbs and trunks, would be rather a painful waste of time and feeling.

Suffice it to say that a charge of cavalry in daylight could never inflict the same amount of mental—not to mention corporeal — damage that these repeated raids of misguided quadrupeds did to me while I was in the transition stage between sleeping and waking,—between the London-sewer night-mare going on in my disordered brain, and the horror of being run over, as I still half-dreamily thought on starting up, by a thundering train of competing City omnibuses. All this, commingled with a powerful nauseating atmosphere, I noted down carefully, as I hailed with joy the dawning day, and added what I thought appropriate to the occasion,—and something to the effect that the rulers of China were a wise people in using their artifices and mild persuasions, with, when required, a more forcible method of argument, to induce us to visit their capital by the same route as that followed by the minister of a late great and peace-loving nation, not many months before; for, truly, if men bent on

journeying to this land of Goshen,—this land flowing with silk and money,—can endure such a villanous place and live, they are not again likely to return, or recommend even their very worst enemies to make their *kow-tow* to His Celestial Majesty at Peking. So that their distant metropolis is tolerably safe from the invasion of intruders, if they have to pass *viâ* Pehtang. In less than a week after, I annexed an underlined postscript, conspicuous for the number of its notes of admiration, which I lavished on the Chinese war-party, who, I said, are an eminently sagacious clique, and better versed in strategy than many thought, when this same town was occupied by the Allied Forces without the expenditure of a single round of ball-cartridge. Surely never was an army so situated before as this was, on the 10th of August, when the rain fell in continuous sheets, rendering the whole country beyond nothing but a great lake, bristling here and there with sad-looking sugar-loaf mounds, under which departed mortality lay soaking. Away below the horizon, it was whispered, the Tartars were chuckling for joy, while we looked wistfully around, and were floundering, like Milton's Sathanas, on what was 'neither sea nor good dry land,' and saw no way of getting at them except on punts, or by beseeching Neptune to convert us into armed Tritons for the time being. Worse than all, there was nothing to eat but adamantine rice-flour biscuit—that seemed to have been kneaded by a full stroke of Nasmyth's steam-hammer, and baked in some superactive volcano—in conjunction with salt pork, that might have been preserved by the original inventor, so desiccative and indurated was it. In addition, there was water, to allay its thirst-producing effects, of a very questionable quality, and with a well-marked brackishness of taste, that was conveyed to us at irregular intervals by boats sent in search of it not far from our present locality.

How many times did we turn our eyes in the direction of the droves of oxen which huddled up the roads and made

the scene more forlorn; when it was debated whether or not it were justifiable and commendable to dine off ox-tail soup —seeing that the flies had been driven away by the rain, and the quadrupeds had no very urgent need of their caudal appendages—indeed would have been better and happier without them, standing as they were half-drowned in pools and ditches. Would they not work as well when required, and in time never miss them, and could we not prolong life on fresh beef much longer than on pork that hadn't *existed* for at least half a century?

Shipwrecked mariners could scarcely have suffered more than we did from the want of fresh water to appease the raging drought engendered by the undue amount of salt one was forced to ingest if one ate at all; and I remember one night, in particular, our having sucked up all the rain-water to be found near my tent, which I had pitched in a graveyard. This, too, was saline; and everything was impregnated with the same seasoning—even the very animals—bipeds, quadrupeds, solipedes, and *split*-pedes—I don't see how even centipedes could miss it—were in a state of pickle. A few days more of such weather in such a slippery basis of operations, and we must have been much worse off. If we are to coincide in the assertion when

'thus the poet sings—
A sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things'—

how much more joyful, in proportion, ought I to be in looking back on these hazardous days, now the dragons of Peking have been '*done*' despite its Cyclopean environing wall, and I am journeying quietly through a *terra incognita*, on my way to inspect the second capital of the empire —the forsaken cradle of the 'Pure Dynasty.'

These reminiscences came to a sudden conclusion when the ferry-boat ranged up at the end of a raised narrow road. The mob of accompanying eye-witnesses split up into two

parties, one remaining on deck, the other disembarking with us to watch the means we employed to get everything ready for the road again, and to pass their comments thereon. All arrangements having been completed, we soon were trotting along in the dark, leaving the reedy swamp on each side behind, and entering between rows of stately willows. We passed along several flat bridges of granite slabs thrown across wide deep ditches communicating with the tributary stream the Hwang-shing hô, for the irrigation of the large gardens that lay on our right. About a mile and a half from the Pehtang hô, we went through the zig-zag but commodious streets of the town of Qui-toosa, with its tasteful one-storied houses of brick,—so remarkably clean outside, and its handsome temple adding to its appearance of substantial comfort. Little knots of good townsmen and their wives were placidly whiling away the evening in homely tattle and tobacco-smoking at the doors, or lolling on mats spread at the sides of the road, reciting tales or discussing the business of the day in loud voices—the youngest making himself as anxious to be heard as the oldest. Before they had time to rouse themselves for observation, we were out of their precincts, still keeping to the well cared-for road, which was, in many places, elevated fifteen and twenty feet above the low country on each side, and less cut up by wheel-ruts than any we had yet seen in North China; until at last, through another avenue of willows, of about a mile in length, we reached the larger town of Fung-tai, where, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, before we had got through one-half of the long main street, the whole of the population seemed to have got an intimation of our arrival, and turned out. By the time the inn was within hail, a little effervescing sea of dusky faces dashing about in white robes followed in our train, or tore away full speed in front, forming a large circle of ever-increasing or diminishing extent around the '*Tien*,' the gates of which

were now closed. More than knocking was required to open them to admit us; a purpose no sooner effected than—before one of our party could push his way through—the wave rolled in with unlooked-for impetuosity, and the unlighted courtyard, already crammed with carts and all sorts of draught animals, was completely blocked up by the half-frantic people. They swarmed not only every corner where a footing could be obtained on or in the buildings, but also the conveyances, greatly to the distress and anxiety of the owners, whose voices we could hear strangely mingled with the other din, pouring out the most voluble supplications or threatening warnings to the transgressors, and rising in intensity when a crash proclaimed that some one of the light passenger cabs, or heavy merchandise carts, had come to misfortune by an upset or break-down. Into this extensive scene of confusion nothing remained but to project ourselves with as much determination as a long fatiguing day's travel prompted us to employ, in order to find a bed in some nook of the low black buildings that surrounded every side of the capacious square. Shouting and a continual flourishing of whips cleared a narrow space for our admission and that of the cart; but Ma-foo, who had gone to reconnoitre the disposition and resources of the place—after keeping us standing in the midst of this overwhelming, strong-flavoured crowd for what appeared a very long time, during which sundry charges had to be performed to prevent the press driving us over altogether—returned with a drooping head and a desponding whine to tell us that every apartment and bunk was engaged and occupied by guests, friends, or travellers, and that we must go somewhere else if we wished to be put up for the night. Pleasant tidings indeed, in a strange place reported to have only this house of accommodation, at such an hour of the evening, and with such a boisterous multitude of petticoated gentlemen contending in the murky obscurity with each other for a look at us!

Needlessly, and without response, did M. call for the landlord. His shout was only echoed back by the bothering garlic-smelling individuals around, who, delighted with his unpremeditated outburst of Chinese, giggled and laughed as they remarked to one another, '*Shau qwan wha*,' 'he speaks our language.' To have left the place would have been nothing short of serious blundering, situated, as we were, among a people of whose friendly or hostile disposition we had as yet no proofs, and of whose honesty we were anything but satisfied in the 'head' spectacles we had not failed to mark well on the way. So, as much to punish the indifference of the host to the laws of hospitality, and thus to teach him a lesson for the benefit of those remote wanderers who might follow us, as to make certain of a refuge until daylight, we resolved to remain in the courtyard—to sleep in or under the cart, as might be most convenient and safe for ourselves and the scanty supply of necessaries we were carrying. Our companion, who had had ample experience in the management of such dilemmas, after making a brilliant chevy against the annoying mass of white and blue, and sending it flying in wild disorder through every possible aperture and over every clearable wall or barrier, betook himself to a snug little room lighted up by two tallow candles and tenanted by two Chinese—the elder and superior being a dumpy, diminutive creature, with a pulpy asthmatical face, and with a very prominent convexity over the region of his stomach, that indicated an advanced stage of prosperity by no means to be concealed, for he had undressed the upper half of his sleek, shining little body, and wore nothing but a pair of strangely-cut grotesque things gathered in great folds around his waist, ungainly and ample enough for the hinder extremities of a hippopotamus, and which, by reason of their encasing his short bandy legs, must here be called trousers. The other was a tall fellow in drab-coloured cottons. Both these individuals sprang up

from the attitudes they had been indolently reclining in as M. entered, as if astonished and little pleased at the interruption.

The podgy gentleman—at this moment looking for all the world as if he had sat for all the portraits, ivory, wood, or jade carvings, of all the patriarchal old men that ever existed or do exist in the eccentric fancies of native art—had just left a tiny square couch in the middle of the cramped room, that seemed adapted to his length and width. It was covered inside with white cotton and comfortably curtained over with thin snowy gauze spread on four corner bamboos to prevent the ingress of any daring gangs of marauding mosquitos while his serene individuality reposed. He seemed more taken aback at the occupation in which we found him engaged than irritated at our unannounced intrusion, for he had been opium-smoking. There, on the miniature bed, stood the small stool, with the yet reeking opium pipe—the smoky deep yellow flame of the lamp dancing on it—and the thin cane pillow on which his globular head had rested during the indulgence of his soporific passion, which we had unwittingly interrupted before the due quantity of the 'manus dei' had been consumed; the larger portion yet remained in the concavity of the cockle-shell near the lamp, testifying to the liberal dose he had laid out for himself for the evening. To M.'s question as to whether he was the landlord, he could not return an answer for some seconds, but kept looking timidly at us, until his neighbour, who had been only inhaling the fumes of the tobacco-pipe, took up the conversation, and set the old man at his ease. He was in no way connected with the inn, but only a lodger, a merchant from some sea-port on the south, and had been a number of years resident in the town.

They could tell nothing about the capabilities of the house, but kindly requested us to sit down on two of the three chairs the room boasted, offered us pipes, and, better

and more welcome than all, filled two cups with scalding weak tea from the inseparable attendant—a large pewter teapot.

Meantime the crowd became more numerous; the window we were sitting near had every one of its oil-paper panes perforated by long-nailed fingers, and eyes darkly sparkling were behind the gaps. The door was twice or thrice nearly carried by storm, and nothing but the dashing sorties of the beleaguered inmates saved the door and window-frame from being carried out of the range of vision. Our quondam friends were civil, but uncomfortable, and evidently did not wish or could not summon courage to smooth the troubled spirits outside; and the proprietors of the numerous equipages and beasts of draught there, roared loudly when one of our irruptions caused a more than usual panic and smashing of shafts, with breaking away of the live stock. It was therefore deemed high time that a more isolated and independent corner should be found, and this M. set himself to seek. Before long he proclaimed that a somewhat unusual appendage to a Chinese building, a second floor, was unoccupied, and that to it we must adjourn. A paper lantern is snatched from the hand of one of our courtyard friends; we scramble into a dilapidated doorway, through a steamy cookshop surfeited with oleaginous odours, and from which the semi-rude greasy *artistes* have levanted on the noisy buzz. Without warning of our approach, we pass to a narrow passage full of break-shin furniture, from whence we can grapple our way to the foot of a creaking shaky staircase, and with about twenty strides reach the landing-place of our wished-for dormitory—an old lumber-room partially filled with very old, very much worn-out household chattels, the rafters cobwebby and scorpion-haunted. They bore a miscellaneous assortment of festival paraphernalia, whose faded colours and tattered tawdry detracted nothing from the general appearance of the place, and lent an air of melancholy despair to two gigantic butterfly

kites with flaccid wings drooping over the mouldy beams instead of fluttering in the freshening breeze. Without the slightest demur we are ready to accept the cover of such a dusky roof.

A man and two or three boys have appeared, as the representatives of the house; cold water is brought to assuage our thirst and bathe our feet; hot tea, for which we have brought sugar, so luxurious are we, reeks in very common bowls; rice, eggs, and the remains of our sausage all marshal themselves under the generalship of Ma-foo, who is now self-dubbed *chef de cuisine* of our peripatetic establishment; and we eat, drink, and are as merry as many more fortunately situated for good cheer. The stairs are groaning and squeaking under their unwonted burden, the floor of the outer room rocks and reels from the oscillating weight imposed on it by countless feet; the sanctity of the inner crib, in which we have cautiously lodged our all, and in which we are now preparing to sleep, is remorselessly invaded; youth and old age stand before us in palpable outline and substantiality, wondrously gazing; while over their heads and away in the darkness, eyes twinklingly give out their lustre like unnumbered stars in the firmament, and the shuffling din of footsteps and tongues affords us a gratuitous concert by no means entertainable after such an unpleasant day. We bore it all, nevertheless, with the greatest patience, until it could be borne no longer. Even Ma-foo, the most tolerant of all humanity, began to lose patience, and his thin shrivelled figure gave tokens of anger. The crush and hurry-skurry reached its exacerbating maximum when M. made one of his sallies armed with a riding-whip.

'*Est modus in rebus* will apply to obstreperous curiosity as well as anything else,' we could not help muttering as a dreadful row ensued—pushing, jumping, and gyrations of the most indescribable kind supervening upon the sudden apparition of the stranger in such a threatening attitude, until

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the whole place was in a state of lively vibration, and nothing less than a sudden visit to the ground-floor seemed likely to be the termination of it.

Hard must have been the tumbles, shocking must have been the squeezes, and heart-rending the rents inflicted on the flowing robes of the nocturnal visitors by that return call. Its effects soon wore off, however; before many minutes a forlorn hope of juvenile desperadoes had once more scaled the ascent, carefully pushed their way through the long gallery of a room, and there were their obliquely-curtained eyes peering wistfully at us from the nearest and safest points of view. They had fairly outstripped us in zeal. Finding our efforts unavailing to drive them permanently away, we had nothing else for it, and so surrendered laughingly, lying down on a very dirty bench. We got the man and boy attendants to open widely the decrepid windows, and make sundry openings to windward, for the entrance of the fresh north breeze that immediately began to blow coolly and somnolescently around; and under the guardianship of a great tortoise-looking pasteboard reptile which hung aloft and gapingly glared below on us with its redundant whitey-piscine eyes, we, in a very few seconds, were quite forgetful of the locality we had reached, or of the spherical physiognomies that loomed upon us in this new paradise so far from home.

'Blessings on sleep! it wraps one round like a mantle,' gratefully says trite Sancho Panza. Redoubled blessings on it, we say, when, after a twelve hours' ride through such a region, cheerless and waterless, broiling and dusty, it sheds its favours so assuagingly and without solicitation; obliterating all sense of loneliness or hardship, and alleviating the effects of fatigue.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TOWN OF FUNG-TAI — AN IMPROVING COUNTRY, AND THE THRIFT OF ITS INHABITANTS — ITS AGRICULTURE — RECOLLECTIONS OF HOME — GRAIN-FIELDS — GARDENS — AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY — THE GRAVE-YARDS — WAYSIDE WELLS — THE VILLAGE PATRIARCHS — THE HAMLET OF HANCHUNG — OUR RECEPTION — 'MEN OF THE GREAT ENGLISH NATION' — AUTOGRAPH-HUNTERS — FAN-INSCRIBING.

SO sound were our slumbers, as we lay exposed to the heavenly night wind on the rigid structure that served us for a bed-place in that airy attic, that—despite the watchman's punctilious chronological registrations on the noisy gong, the melodious cantillations of the early vendors of materials for the preparation of the early morning meal, or the rapid accession to the number of those hapless beings who, we could not forbear thinking, must have kept watch over us during the night in order to notify to the outsiders if anything particularly strange presided over or influenced us during the dark hours devoted to rest and peace by themselves, as they crouched down on their hunkers lost in attention — we did not awake until a late hour, when the sun had fairly got above the tops of the houses, throwing his rays in gold and silver gleams, over furrowed tiles and horned gables,—through the verdant foliage of the wide-spreading willows that grew in an adjoining garden, and, in long dazzling white pencils, darted in fitful starts through our windows and played about our bodies like the impaling knives hurled from the steady hand of a Chinese juggler.

We had o'erslept ourselves, and were all the better for it — if entire riddance from weariness and thirst, hunger

and scorching, and the substitution of good spirits and contentment in lieu thereof, were to be accepted as guarantees. The baggage was quickly huddled into the cart, after a mild form of breakfasting had been rehearsed on the remains of last night's feast; the mules were once more in harness, the ungroomed steeds fixed in their rusty, dusty saddles and bridles, the saddle-girths barely clutching each side of the saddles over stomachs filled to bursting or cerebral apoplexy by unmeasured quantities of cut straw. Ma-foo is mounted; our last night's acquaintance, jacketless as usual, protrudes his little fat body with his little round face, garnished by a long-stemmed pipe, for a second beyond the cover of the door, and darts back again as we make as speedy an exit as possible. We are besieged by the citizens and the scamps of the place, who cling tenaciously to our skirts as we emerge from the 'Tien,' and they only left us when speed and distance had vanquished them. The town of Fung-tai was now visible, and though in the darkness of our entry we may have missed the best portion, yet we were pleased with this view of the small place. The houses were remarkably good, the shops large and cleanly for Chinese shops, and the main street, through which we were passing tolerably wide, though, like all other streets or roads here, unpaved and rutted.

An iron-foundry stood on our right as we passed through, in the courtyard of which we could see pots and cauldrons and other articles of utility laid out in rows, and smutty faces and hands moving among them; while on the right—on the left bank of the Hwang-shing-hô, to which the town seems to be principally indebted for its trade—were timber-yards and workshops in abundance, the toiling inmates of which skip out to have a look at such an unwonted sight. The road leading for about a mile from the suburbs, is raised many feet above the level of the plain; and the solid character of its earthen banks, the width and firmness of the surface,

and the efficiency and neatness of the deep drains on each side, mark its importance in regard to the communication maintained between this and the adjacent towns and villages beyond. Drawing nearer the hills, with their endless variety of aspect, the country rises in gentle undulations and in perceptible slope towards their base; great care begins to be manifested in the cultivation of the land, which is improving in every possible way. The region of deluge and prostrating monotony, with its vapid sameness and congregated family arks, has disappeared; all that can please or delight the eye in rural beauty is before us, and we pass along with a sentiment, and a keener relish for everything Chinese than had animated us since our arrival in the Flowery Land,—a condition of happiness, doubtless, owing much to sound healthful sleep, the salubrity of the locality, and the modified temperature, with the delightful variation in the landscape; but perhaps more to the investment we greedily made of a few cash in pocketfuls of apricots and peaches, which, though scarcely ripe, gave sufficient of the aroma and *goût* of these fruits to refresh our dusty mouths and throats for a long time. After travelling through many quiet villages and hamlets standing on the winding road, about ten o'clock we come upon the first spring well we have seen since leaving Peking last year. It was in as pretty and as homely a village as could well be found out of Britain, the name of which —Ee-ma-tschwan, 30 le from Fung-tai—for the benefit and regeneration of future summer travellers, we here record; and 10 le further we found another quite as charming and as rich in the possession of excellent water, with its little cottages built of brick and whitewashed, their roofs tiled or thatched, and roomy enclosures also of brick, finished in the most workmanlike manner, and the attached gardens stocked with fruit trees and vegetables. Every little aggregation of houses, spread evenly and not too thickly over the country, was snugly embosomed in genial sylvan shade, from the light

green curtain of which they peeped out lovingly on the tastefully-planted rows of trees that grew apart from them like model plantations, for fuel or building purposes. We were speeding through the most fertile and prosperous corner of the province of Chili—so far as the scanty information gathered from books and people could tell us—and getting among scenes very different from those met with in more southern latitudes in regard to the natural productions of the district. So much did they resemble many at home, that, could we only have inserted, in the midst of those clumps of foliage away to our right, the square substantial outline of a country mansion, with its large old-fashioned windows almost invisible through the sweeping branches, and its chimneys rising skyward from the blue-slated roof, and been able to dot a church spire towering above the topmost boughs of the old willows near that coterie of snowy rustic habitations in the upland before us, distance might have been annihilated, and we in imagination travelling along some one of the green lanes in the grain-bearing quarters of Oxfordshire, Yorkshire, or the Weald of Kent; or revelling in the contemplation of the golden crops and the prospect of an abundant harvest in the unrivalled carses of Gowrie or Stirling. Consentaneously with the amelioration in the agricultural lineaments of the neighbourhood we had entered and observed as we passed along, the dress and well-to-do appearance of the people improved in a direct proportion; and the purer atmosphere, with the desirable concomitants of good and plentiful food and regular living, indicated a much higher degree of robust health and serene complacency of temper than we could ever see in or near the pent-up cities left behind us.

Heaved up in a cold grey mass to our left—barren and naked, with their spiked and corrugated borders projected into the upper air, barely fined and smoothed down by the blue veil of aerial gauze delicately intervening between us

and them—the hoary mountains of granite look, as they stretch away into immeasurable distance in front, like a vast cast-iron barrier erected by Cyclopean hands to repel the rude north wind in its passage across this fair and fruitful plain—their forbidding grandeur, undisturbed by the invading thriftiness of the labourers below only because the stony surface would allow nothing to live, draped sternly around them as in primeval ages when they seemed old standing over a young earth. From their feet, extending away to the right and right-front, and margined only by the sky, lay a cosmorama of wavy vegetation, a sea of yellowish green, placidly sweeping and nodding in every direction, and obeying the light puffy airs from the ravines and gullies. This is the result of uninterfered-with industry and unwearied toil; a fair and acceptable specimen of the glory and pride of the sons of Ham, alike their source of grandeur and permanency, their populousness and prosperity, uniformity and cheerful peacefulness as a nation. It is a country cultivated to the utmost degree that mortal man, unaided by science, could hope to attain.

Not a weed can be detected by the closely scrutinising eye, nor a waste yard of soil not producing something or other useful—every inch of ground capable of bearing a stalk has it; and over the whole expanse of the prolific landscape, not a hedge, wall, bank, or fence, to steal space from the limits of unsurpassed frugality, can be descried. The high roads, reduced to the most attenuated dimensions, and barely wide enough for the two-wheeled cart to move on, are unenclosed by anything that might prevent damage being done to the unprotected plants through which they creep, except at uncertain intervals, where a short trench is dug near and at an angle to their margins for the purpose of guarding against the encroachment of carriages and keeping them in the proper track; while the friendly regard and courtesy of the equestrians and drivers of teams by whom we closely scrape, and

their consideration for the general weal, generously compel them to fasten over every weary animal's mouth a muzzle of basket or rope, to prevent the injurious nibbling of the unconscious and unscrupulous beasts.

Never by any nation could the gentle Ceres be so devoutly worshipped as she is by this; and if the inclement North is less sparing in its gifts, and demands greater sacrifices of time and patience than in the glowing, hothouse, steady temperature of the South, the husbandman is not the less willing to do her due homage for a share of her divine countenance and grace. Those impenetrable jungles of Barbadoes millet or 'lofty corn,' so regularly drilled and so uniform in their height of twelve or fourteen feet, with their ruddy brown heads standing heavily over the rustling leaves, though a casual glance might say otherwise, are yet only a portion of the gift; for in narrower drills between each of the tall lines grows the shorter and less bulky, but not much less useful panicled millet, with its fine yellow seed-topped stalk springing humbly from the feet of its gigantic companions—alternated, in stray fields, with perhaps wheat in small quantity, or barley, or the castor-oil plant, which, we have been told, forms by means of its seeds an article of food—or even a kind of pulse or bean, climbing and twining around the strong stems of the high millet for support until its produce is ripe. Small fields occur frequently where the dusky olive-green melons lie thick as cannon-balls on a hard-fought battle-field; where the bright yellow flower of the meagre dwarfish 'Ming wha' or cotton-plant varies the prevailing hue of the surrounding vegetable world in plots of greater or less size; and parcels of little squares of the plants cultivated for the production of the blue colouring matter with which they dye their cotton fabrics; with sometimes long stretches of the profitable maize, already nearly ripe, unbendingly shaking the pinky plume depending from its imbricated crest.

There are the gardens, too, where the art of horticulture,

practised pretty freely abroad, is pushed as far as diligent hands, old-fashioned heads, and the experience of centuries can reach, and which contribute their full quota of domestic beauty to the pleasant picture. Some of the more extensive, belonging to the wealthier style of houses, we cannot contrive to see, because of the high stone or brick wall overhung by the light green drapery of the willow, the primrose-yellow blossom of the acacia, or the glistening dark green of the laurel growing within; but the less pretentious enclosures line the road for some extent through the villages, and over the low fence or brick barrier they are garnished with, a full but not crowded assortment of growing materials necessary for the maintenance and enjoyment of the simple lives led by the unassuming owners. They are laid out in a manner that would agreeably astonish enthusiasts in these pursuits at home; orderly ranks of millet-stalk trellis-work are covered kindly by flowering creepers which lend their gay colours for the present and give their seeds into the bargain afterwards; and numerous varieties of potherbs are spread out between, in truly economic fashion. The roofs and sides of cave-like arbours built up of lattice-work, are buried beneath the leaves and tendrils of the well-trained vine, or the flowers and heavy fruit of the pumpkin. Neatly trimmed peach, plum, pear, and apple trees are dotted in the most convenient and favourable spots; but there are few plants grown merely for the sake of their flowers, and of these the cockscomb and honeysuckle predominate. Invariably the sunniest nook of every one of these pet patches was devoted to the propagation and nurture of nicotian leaves — very green and graceful they looked—to be consumed in the ministering pipe; and all betokened the triumphant success of that unwearied assiduity which seems to be the natural endowment of the good folks whom we see leisurely and steadily working around us, as if their labour, instead of tiring or making them discontented, only added renewed vigour and unalloyed pleasures

to the increasing daily routine of duty which they seem to seek. Hoeing in little gangs, turning up the rich sandy loam, or ploughing the surface of the soil around the roots of each row of plants, all the 'efficients' of the villages appear to be employed, and taking advantage of the auspicious weather to hasten the approach of the welcome harvest. Even the children were amusing themselves in assisting the aged and infirm in garden operations, and learning their great lesson in life from those whom ripe years, ample experience, and respected tradition had most fitted for the task. All, from childhood to adolescence and senile decay, laboured away as if they had been ants, or as if the words of the poet had given them energy and resolution to toil in their own peculiar way for an existence unchequered by ambition or the cares of a more highly civilized world. Rigidly and undeviatingly they seem to cling to the injunctions given by the Emperor Kanghi in the sacred edicts: 'Give,' he says, 'the chief place to husbandry, and the cultivation of the mulberry-tree, in order to procure adequate supplies of food;' and to those of his son, Yungching, who, actuated by the same feelings, and conscious that

> 'There is a perennial nobleness and sacredness in work,—
> In idleness alone is there perpetual despair,'—

admonishes his subjects thus:—'Suffer not a barren spot to remain a wilderness, or a lazy person to abide in the cities. Then the farmer will not lay aside his plough and hoe, or the housewife put away her silkworms and her weaving. Even the productions of the hills and marshes, of the orchards and vegetable gardens, and the propagation of the breed of poultry, dogs, and swine, will all be regularly cherished, and used in their season to supply the deficiencies of agriculture.'

With the birth of the Empire, the tillage of the ground has yet as great a hold upon the majority of the northern population as ever it could have; and though they are, perhaps, no further advanced so far as regards improving their

implements and methods of utilising the materials at hand, than their progenitors were in the days when our ancestors were roaming through woods and wilds, finding in the chase the sole means of subsistence—their unclothed bodies smeared over with azure pigments, and their hirsute breasts, mayhap, grotesquely adorned with the sun, moon, and stars, delineated in mystic array—the antiquated air which envelopes everything here, and the testimony of the wonderful industry of the people, are in point of attraction, in our opinion, worth anything to be witnessed in their towns or cities.

And we are not surprised to notice that the utilitarian spirit is carried even beyond the grave, and beyond the veneration which we had understood the Chinese professed for their departed relations; for in the rural graveyards where,

> 'Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep'—

there is no exemption from the universal ploughing, scraping, and sowing; and, as no particular place is set apart apparently for a public burying-ground, nor any attempts made at walling in those conical earthen tumuli,—so humble when compared with the elaborate and tastefully painted horse-shoe or Ω tombs of the south—the latter render some portion of every landholder's property a Woking cemetery on a diminished scale. On them time and the weather produce their usual effects; so that in those fields where at present the turf heaves in many a mouldering heap, around each the hoe has been zealously plied,—the plough has passed,—and the grain droops lazily; a generation or two will see them level and undistinguishable from the common earth around, when the heavy wooden coffins will have crumbled away, and their contents have subsided into dust and gone to enrich the ground the deceased so often tilled.

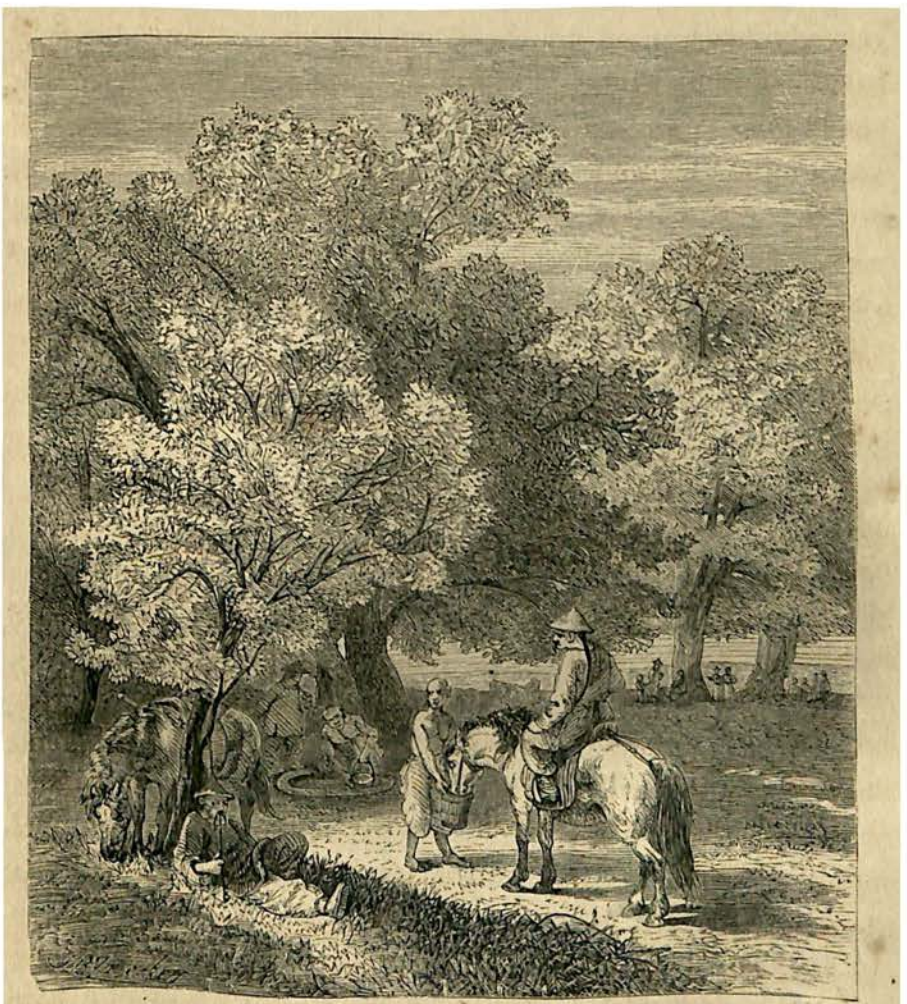
Everywhere on our road we had occasion to observe this custom,—this payment of the loan former husbandmen

had for so long a term and so repeatedly borrowed from Mother Earth. Grand or great-grandchildren, when the season returns, remingle the ashes of their sires with the kindred dust to which they have been consigned, and erect a fitting monument to their gone-by habits of industry in well-tended crops ripening abundantly above them. The mahogany-coloured plain countenances, turned towards us in a half proud, half inquisitive kind of way, when we got near enough to these sons of the soil, and the free, independent sort of bearing that each naturally wears when addressed, betoken the self-satisfied and self-reliant spirit reigning within, as if they were always about to repeat that rustic song of theirs which smacks so strongly and vividly of the 'Miller o' Dee:'—

> 'The sun comes forth, and we work:
> The sun goes down, and we rest.
> We dig wells, and we drink:
> We sow fields, and we eat.
> The emperor's power, what is it to us?'

What would our fairies say to those wayside draw-wells at which we are perpetually stopping to glut our drouthy desires with the purest and most refrigerating nectar ever imbibed by unregenerated man, drawn from their dark, mossy depths by a tiny scooped-out wooden clog, dripping its icy drops with startling coldness down our necks and sleeves, as the glorious beverage is gulped over in invigorating streams; and where our ponies bury all but their eyes and ears in wide buckets overflowing with such unusual cheer, or greedily suck up the shallow contents of the half gourd-shell, and wistfully look for more? If the Oreads find but a bleak and far from romantic abode in the cold, sombre mountains frowning above us, and the Dryads have just cause to grumble at the scanty and often broken repose afforded in the narrow belts of wood so reluctantly granted them from the matter-of-fact country around by the most mundane and

materialistic of men, how grateful and happy must be the Naiads; and how blithe must our good little friends feel, as they gambol and wheel now in the umbrage of those pendent boughs so thickly foliaged and intertwined, skimming about the gnarled trunks of emerald-green willows,



A Road-side Well.

planted centuries ago in half-circles around the health-giving water, and then in the pale yellow moonbeams that skip lightly on the shred of grass-plat, allowed to fringe the fairy circle, unheeding that these resorts are the work of mortal hands, and are still under their special care.

If at night we can imagine these places to be so pleasantly thronged with such felicitous creatures, and envy them their lot, in the daytime we need no such aid to conjure up in reality as happy a scene as ever dazzled bewildered human eyes that chanced to obtain a momentary peep into fairyland. In the deepest obscurity of those grand old trees, scarcely interrupted by the filmiest gleam of sunshine, congregated around the wells from whence they have derived so much life, are the village patriarchs, met in quiet concord to discuss the unchronicled gossip and tittle-tattle of their little world,— to guard their tottering grandchildren from harm, — to smoke their pipes, and wear through the twilight of their halcyon days.

They are tall, hale sexagenarians and octogenarians, with long, thin, flowing grey beards and moustaches, weak, tearful eyes, wrinkled faces, and scalps entirely destitute of hair, save the half-dozen shrivelled silvery filaments so carefully preserved on their old crowns, and plaited up with black silken thread to serve as an apology — a very slender one — for the fashionable innovation of Tartar origin, and a submission to the acquired taste, for this most distinguishing mark of all, of the power of a dominant race. They form a suitable accompaniment to the other elements of rural grandeur and simplicity in which we wander, and are types of the paternal worthies the Chinese so much love to depict, allied as they are with those tiny lumps of good-natured childhood, which they nurse and amuse with such sapient drollery,— oleaginous little sprouts scarcely able to creep and crawl around the knees that are almost too stiff and feeble to keep pace with their infantile strides, with round, colourless faces, noses barely elevated above the flat, uninteresting surface, and black eyes, jetty and glistening as those of a mouse, looking out on the world. The convex surface of their germinating craniums is shaven, and decked with erectile tufts of soft, raven-coloured hair, in the most

arbitrary and fantastic way,— sometimes a stumpy tail on both sides of the crown,— sometimes only one on the right or left side, and sometimes as many as four or five rise up in stiff twists in an indefinite array of paint-brushes, with their nether extremities duly clothed in bags, that are facsimiles on a proportionate scale to those worn by adolescence, which are suspended from the naked shoulders by wide braces.

For nearly fifteen miles our path lay in the midst of this abundant grain-producing country, and led us through these domestic and prosperous scenes. We quitted them with hearty regret when the cart began to trundle from the scrimp to a wider road, descending from the fertile slope to the unpretending roomy main street of the little town or village of Han-chung. Our entrance having been both rapid and abrupt, the people were thrown into a lively state of confusion, rushing out of doors, hurriedly banging-to doors and gates, flying gladly out to meet, and flying with terror away from us — the gentler portion of the community involving themselves in the mêlée in a very ungraceful and unfeminine manner. Luckily, a grey-bearded old countryman, leading a horse with a pair of panniers on its back, pulled up at one side of the road to make way for us, and, after a friendly stare and gape, throwing his rugged umber-shaded features into the most agreeable and welcome contortions, he bawled out his sentiments of admiration to the throng in an unmistakeable volley of 'How can — how can! — beautiful sight, grand sight!' This certainly allayed the fears and commotions of the more terrified. The midday halt was in the only auberge the place could boast; and in a primitive 'bothy' in the courtyard we were content to refresh and rest ourselves as best we might.

Cold water from the best tap, warm tea, rice, and eggs, constituted our *déjeuner* in Han-chung, and a midday nap would have been a *sine quâ non* after the ride and the soporific tendencies of the mountain air; but to do

more than wink was out of the usual course of events now-a-days in these outlandish regions, where foreigners had never been seen before, and the inhabitants of which seldom, if ever, travelled many li from their own door-posts. The inn, all the entrances thereto, with the court-yard and our own door-posts and window, were carried by the rustics without a show or feint of opposition from the proprietors, and every paper pane, wooden or mat screen or partition, capable of penetration, was bored and rent by finger or instrument for the scrutiny and information of the hungry lot outside. Those wedged and woven nearest us were too much afraid, too intent on keeping their ground, or too much amazed, to talk; but many were the questions and remarks bandied about by those pressing and jostling in the rear.

Ma-foo was, as on all other occasions, the vehicle for the transmission of their inquiries, as he was the willing medium of communication between us and the natives, and though every one of the outside candidates pinned themselves on to him whenever circumstances required that he should break his way through, yet he was uniformly civil, and answered their interrogations as if he had been on the most intimate and friendly terms with them for years. The question unceasingly poked at him by every fresh arrival was in some way connected with our nationality. That appeared to be the foundation from which they were to raise their ideas and historical deductions, and to confirm or eradicate previous suppositions. 'What manner of men are those?' always met with the unvarying response, 'Ta ying-kwoh yins,' men of the great English nation. Finding we did not murder and eat them, they soon became confident enough, and two or three even ventured within the doorway, through which they were requested to retire again, as their tobacco fumes were anything but aromatic: while those who saw everything distinctly, passed on descriptions, with their own comments, of our marvellous costume, ways of

eating, and general inexpressibly odd appearance. A perfect fermentation in the whole mass arose when they began to describe the curious style in which we wrote, our pens, and, above all, the pencils, which they evidently believed to be something miraculous in being capable of writing over whole pages without ink. One spectacled respectable old man fairly pushed his way to where I sat, and only stayed his inquisitiveness when the goat-like beard of his was sweeping over my book, and I could contain my laughter no longer. Not in the least ashamed or daunted at the length to which his unmanageable curiosity had carried him, he began to turn over the leaves, examining the quality of the paper, and especially admiring its glossiness, and then, after chuckling and nodding his delight—he must have been a paper manufacturer or a schoolmaster—he presented us with his fan for our worshipful autograph to be inscribed thereon by such a mysterious stylet.

Already one side was figured over with inscriptions—black, clear, and very neatly painted—probably it was the *gage d'amitié* of some cherished friend who had sought to perpetuate a mutual regard by an impromptu verse in his own style of writing; so, fancying ourselves highly honoured by this compliment, we felt bound to propitiate a short-lived friendship by complying with his reasonable demand, and on the other side penned a regular chronological detail of our names, date of our departure from Tien-tsin, arrival at the village, and probable destination. Before we had finished our job, half a dozen worthies, with a like number of fans, were in upon us for the same token of our condescension and esteem; and too highly flattered by the civil reception and attention paid us, it was only a pleasant though imperative duty to repeat the history with some slight variations to please their eyes, for they could no more understand the meaning of the characters in which we wrote, than we did those of their language, and it would have been useless to

attempt their interpretation. While we were at work, lo! the onlookers outside had scuttled off and returned, each possessed of a new fan, destined to become a family *curio* for the future. Our personal description having been worn threadbare, and events, past, present, and to come, penned out, we had recourse to as much as our memories retained of the popular songs of the day; and making up a medley from the first lines of each ditty, furnished an expansive collection of materials sufficient to startle the editorial staff of all the penny warblers and comic song-books of the day — greatly to the delight of the unenlightened but highly flavoured beings who honoured us with their sociable presence in such a rest-dispelling manner during the heat of the day.

CHAPTER IX.

CULTIVATION OF INDIGO—BED OF THE TAU-HÔ—MANUFACTURE OF POTTERY—A CHINESE DOCTOR—AN ORATOR—NEW DOOR-FASTENING—EFFICACY OF FLAGELLATION—A ROW—BAD WATER AND WORSE TEA—REPULSIVE MODE OF SERVING UP POULTRY—CHINESE MINSTREL—RECOLLECTIONS OF CELTIC MUSIC—CHINESE SINGING—NATIVE FIDDLE.

OUR short halt had expired; we had still our twenty miles to ride before night. The novelty excited by our stay had been slightly worn off, our bill was paid, and all that was necessary to transact before we bade good-bye to the secluded town, accomplished. We moved out into the streets again, through the lanes of upturned faces on each side; and were soon in the country, plodding and ploughing through sandy roads, sometimes uphill, sometimes downhill; into villages and out again, nearing the mountains one half-hour, and leaving them the next; buried in the surging seas of millet, disentombed in speckled fields of melons or auriferous cotton shrubs; half swamped amongst Indian corn, gliding through arcades of sylvan architecture bidding defiance to the thoroughfare of the sun, or across encaustic squares of dye-plants and brown earth; on to roads divergent, convergent — everything but straight, and irregular, heavy, and shifting, inconsistent and unendurable, in their general character, were it not for the mellow temperature of the afternoon and the agreeable diversity of everything coming within the range of vision. A large piece of ground is passed which is solely given up to the cultivation of the greenish-purple indigo, among the even lines of which hoers are industriously turning over and breaking up the earth. Two wide cisterns of white cement, some eight or

ten feet in breadth, and four or five in depth, are in the middle of the crop for the maceration or fermentation of the plants which are not yet in flower.

Notwithstanding the ups and downs,— the tortuous fickle track,—we were gaining the grizzly hills. Unhandy knobs of rock burst through the sand, the first specimens we had to stumble over for many a day. Here it would be a series of points and nodules of granite, over which our ponies had to step carefully and gingerly; there, a stiff ridge of hard dark grey limestone intruding itself on the toilsome road with a thin crust of calcareous conglomerate overlapping it, and more rarely a soft friable light-coloured sandstone cropping in round masses from the bed of the cart path.

The arable land began to forsake us and to subside into the distance, and the villages to become more widely separated, and hid in depressions and gaps. Thin withered herbage lay on the elevations, scantily clothing their nakedness and preventing their carrying a chilly aspect, but away towards the north and south are the verdant blooming straths and plains, with their ripening harvests gleaming in serried gradations of colour, until they become blended with the deep blue of the cloudless sky. The little stone cabins were not so tightly jammed together, but sought to secure themselves from exposure and bleakness in choice spots that afforded in many cases but slender room for a few, so that they were devoid of that regularity and compactness which gave the more fortunately situated dwellings in the fertile localities an aspect of comfort and prosperity; and the peculiarities of situation, with the measures taken to remedy them, caused a departure from the ordinary style of building that lent a curious appearance to the sparsely distributed houses on which we looked down every now and again from the tops of high banks and ridges.

The bed of the Tau-hô, an inconsiderable stream lying at the bottom of a narrow gully whose sides were wrapped in

the brightest emerald vegetation, was easily crossed at the ford, the long drought having considerably diminished its volume. This must at times be somewhat large, judging from the high-water lines it has left on each steep bank, beyond which it opens out abruptly over an oozy tract furnished with random willows along its course.

Soon after our road led between three bald hills; on one of them, the highest, was a wild lonely temple, standing like a ruined German château, on the most inaccessible point, a very conspicuous landmark; and a bold spur of brownish grey that had started from the long chain of mountains on the left to join its isolated fellows on the right. Not far from this, and probably to gain the advantage of the breeze always sweeping about the high ground, three dome-shaped kilns for the manufacture of coarse pottery, like our own in outline, were reared on an elevated ridge. The ware, consisting chiefly of huge vats glazed inside and outside, all except the rim, was of a formidable thickness, and wide and deep enough to have concealed in each of them two of Ali Baba's forty thieves whom Morgiana disposed of. The demand for these articles must be somewhat great if the numerous rows of them piled up ready to be taken away for service be any criterion, and a busy throng of soiled workmen were active in the various stages of production, and adding to the collection; pulverising, kneading, and tempering the blackish coally-looking coarse clay, in colour like the Stourbridge clay, and which burns like it white in the furnace—by the aid of ponies and asses, and simple but effective contrivances; moulding and finishing the plastic material by hand, and conveying the vessels to the bottom aperture of the kilns where they are to be baked by those heaps of small coal of tolerable quality, brought, they tell us, from some coal-pit in the neighbouring hills.

The transportation of such heavy brittle ware from such an excluded manufactory, over such bumping rough roads,

must tend to increase its value; but the situation has been evidently chosen in consequence of its geological advantages, all the necessary ingredients being found within a small radius—a fortuitous circumstance which we could not again record on the whole of our route.

Near the end of our day's journey, another stream, the Tang-yau, was forded; and long before daylight had vanished we were in the main suburban street of Kai-ping, in which we halted for a few minutes to make some purchases opposite an apothecary's door. Inside his shop we could remark pendulous bunches of dried herbs around the walls, drawers and pots, and cupboards ranged on the sides and back of the dimly lighted abode. The vendor of rhubarb and ginseng, simples and plaisters, we could barely discern behind a long counter, artistically wielding a pestle in a brass mortar—one of many such in which are manipulated the bitter treasures collected within the ever-dreaded sanctum of the country doctor, who is as much an institution here as in the most sickly country in Europe.

The town was enclosed within an indefensible wall much in need of repair—crumbling as it was to the very gate through which we had to pass before an inn could be found, but bearing traces of having seen better and more important days, in its paved roadways beneath arches of tolerable width, but now highly dangerous to the feet and knees of the quadrupeds, as well as to the efficiency of the wheels and axletree of the cart. This sustains a round of disjointing concussions before we are in the leading thoroughfares, where we have reason to believe a brick either fell from some invisible source, or was hurled as a *peace*-offering by one of a group of shopkeepers who lounged about the entrance to a store—and some of whom wore looks that did not belie their intentions. The salute did not meet with any amount of attention; indeed, M., at whose feet the missile dropped, only casually noticed the occurrence. Soon after we were

in the yard of our hotel, with as rude a rabble of scatterlings and frantic busy-bodies as had yet pestered us in China. The building was bad and dirty even for China, but was in keeping with the general condition of the neglected town, with its old houses decaying for lack of spirit—wide street, gutterless, and nothing better than a sloppy cesspool, more useful for the reception of the odds and ends and vile garbage ejected by the filth-cherishing inmates of the creaky dens on each side, than as a way for the convenience of tramps or traffic. It strongly reflected the image of some towns we have seen in an island not far from Great Britain, where the introduction of railways and the abolition of stage-coaches have left the halts and coaching places—never in a very lively stage of sanitary reform, or celebrated for habits of cleanliness—in a chronic state of mud and ruin.

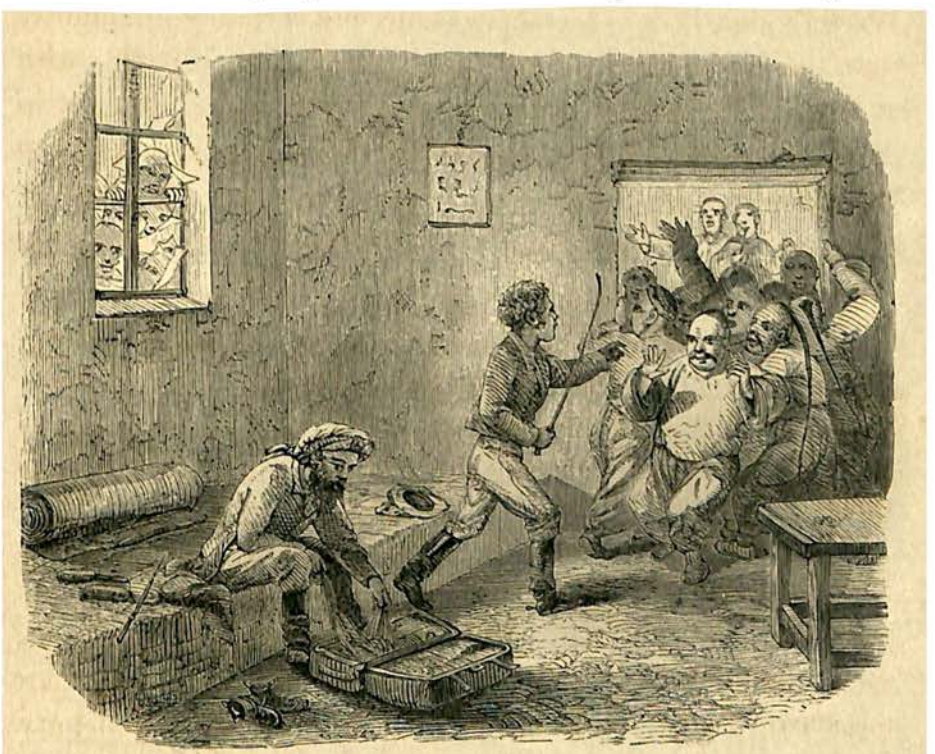
Where everything was so pitiably dirty and neglected, we had not much to choose in the matter of apartments, our noses generally deciding which could be rendered endurable for the longest space of time if by opening door and windows, and exterminating all the live stock that could be found on the premises, the more objectionable effluvia and vermin could be dispelled; and having seized upon a corner distant from all other inhabited rooms, with a low shaky brick wall enclosing a little space in front of the door, we fondly but vainly flattered ourselves we could shut ourselves in and perform our ablutions without hindrance from the presence of the clamorous mob. The landlord was in an unenviable plight — ill-natured and morose he seemed to be at the best of times—for, without showing us the least consideration, and leaving Ma-foo to conduct us through his piggeries of sleeping apartments as best he might, he applied himself to the crowd, beginning in a most lugubrious inconsistent whine as he saw the sacredness of the choicest rooms invaded, and things thrown topsy-turvy, gradually rising to the most inspiriting harangue as the outer gates, which had been closed on our

arrival, were forced—and bursting, *con amore*, into a far more natural whirlwind of deadly invective as the flood came rolling onwards, threatening to overwhelm him and squash, beyond the reach of redemption, the fowls and pigs exposed to its rush.

Bolts or fastenings there were none on the narrow doors of room and enclosure. The former had a contrivance for pulling it to, far behind the elegantly-designed springs of Western lands, but yet as serviceable, and certainly less clumsy than those cords and weights we have often been baffled with at home. It was nothing more than a bow made from a strip of bamboo and tightly bent by a leathern thong, fastened to the inside of the door; from the thong ran a thin leather strap, the end of which was firmly attached to the door-post; thus, by the elasticity of the bamboo and the tension of the strap, the door is kept closed, and when opened has the greater tendency to close again because of the bow being more bent. This was but a sorry security against intruders, and was shortly to be curved to its utmost limits; for we had no sooner taken possession, than the small private allotment without was crammed, and a mass of yellow skins were competing for the best sight-seeing places in the tainted domicile, with the howling, helpless old landlord behind venting imprecations on his agitated townsmen. Firm steps were necessary; half measures would have made things worse. M. was deputy Minister for War; but gifted to an admirable degree with sentiments of peace and goodwill towards all men, and the Chinese in particular, and impressed with the necessity of preserving the *juste milieu* between truckling to their curiosity on the one hand from fear of offending them, and using harsh measures to keep them in awe, he applied the mollifying *suaviter in modo* with becoming grace and tact—but with no other effect than to set one-half of his audience laughing and grinning in derision, and inducing further symptoms of disturbance.

With a promptness and vigour of attack worthy of the best

cause, he now brought into the arena the invincible *fortiter in re* of a determined Briton; and never did magic wand, plied by the hand of Bosco, Houdin, or Anderson, induce such apparent miracles as did that flexible riding-whip in the hand of my companion. The room was cleared as if all had disappeared in the ground (good job if they had), but the courtyard was wedged with all sorts and sizes, and those from the room falling back on those in a perfect state of panic



Clearing the Room.

—an ebullition, as hard to look on with equanimity as to delineate in words. Then the most crushing struggle began for the narrow aperture by which they had entered, but in which two or three globular citizens had, at the very commencement, managed, in their terror and haste, to get irremovably jammed, and these all the mad press behind utterly failed to stir. It now became apparent that something must give way, and though the warlike demonstrations had ceased,

the unbridled strength of the outside pests became augmented, until each of the adipose bolsters so mysteriously and skilfully compressed into such a meagre slit, looked as if about to burst before it would give way. Their individual faces disclosed the ticklish position in which they but too well knew they had got themselves. They looked at us with the most abject 'funk,' and then at those who laboured and heaved against them like battering-rams, as if each one said, in anything but a defiant spirit,

> Come on, come all, this *wall* shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I!

But the wall, luckily for them, had not a firm base; and just before they came to the collapsing point, a throe which must have accelerated, if it did not effect, that catastrophe, was exerted by the whole, and down came the wall, doors, and doorposts. All were mingled in a regular scramble, from which they picked themselves up in half-time and fled routed, leaving their vanquisher in full possession of the field. The scrambling, grappling, and sprawling, resembled the clown's 'row' scene in a good Christmas pantomime, and afforded as merry a laugh as ever was elicited in boyhood by those seasonable holiday performances. When the discomfited fugitives halted beyond the limits of the court, and found that the terrible strangers had not slain one-half of their number, they enjoyed the fun as heartily as ourselves; laughing and holding their sides in splitting roars, greatly to the chagrin of our host, who strutted, danced, and shouted, until nothing but a well-timed fit of apoplexy could have saved him from absolute madness. He was, we can unhesitatingly aver, the most outrageously demonstrative and rabid Chinaman it has been our misfortune to be within hail of. We felt relieved on his account, and also on our own, when the irritable man was driven by excess of bile to the shelter of his particular den, from which he did not again show coun-

tenance that evening, greatly to the comfort of his guests. Not so, however, the industrious knaves manœuvring without. They betrayed no symptoms of succumbing to the fright they had received, or yielded to their incessant dodging from one place to another for the gratification of their eyesight, but gained confidence from our peaceable attitude, which arose from an unfeigned desire to preserve the miserable *posada* from wreck and ruin. They gained the doors and windows once more, but from these they were moved with the utmost alacrity on the slightest motion inside.

The bill of fare was as little adapted to our tastes as were the other accommodations of the place. The water was bad, and the tea was worse. Indeed, nothing could exceed the badness of the water but the worthlessness of the tea; and their combination was an abomination no amount of thirst could have tolerated. The liquid could not have come from the springs we had passed; whence came the leaves we could not ascertain. We suspected very strongly that they bore a more natural claim to the stem of the Chinese buckthorn (*Rhamnus Theezans*) than to that of the *Thea viridis* or genuine tea-plant. Harsh and bitter did the scalding abomination cling to our tongues. But, with the exception of a bony fowl, nothing else could be had to satisfy our by no means fastidious European wants and fancies. Ultimately our bag of rice was opened, a tin of soup emptied, and another sausage driven out of its hermetical fortress.

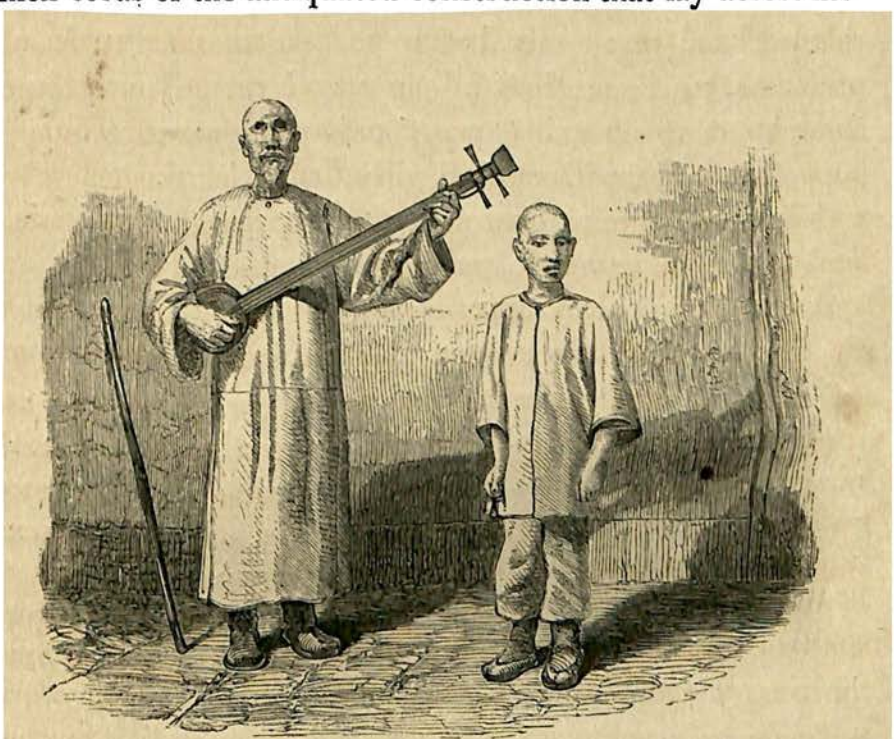
Ma-foo had been pursuing to the death, aided and supported by two scullions, all the winged denizens of the locality, and now came in with two cackling victims for approval, whose only recommendations were the enormous development of bones, tendons, and feathers, and parsimonious portion of muscle with which nature had endowed them. Our necessities, but not our wills, consented, and they were hurried off, amid screeches and screams, to an untimely death. They were scalded in a greasy cauldron

of water in the twinkling of an eye, from whence, after a hurried boil, they were withdrawn, and laid before us, in all the pomp and pride of intact heads and legs, even to the very claws, combs, and bills. The fellow who officiated as cook, thrifty to a disgusting degree (else he could never have left these mementoes of recent murder to disfigure the objects of his solicitude), actually brought in the whole of the intestines, as well as about half a dozen shelless gamboge-coloured ova in an oily basin, to ask whether we should prefer having them fried in pig fat, or dressed *à la mode*, and served up after his own approved style with chopped pork and garlic. Dreadfully dissatisfied he seemed when we expressed our sincere wish that he would immediately leave the room, and take with him the nauseous trash.

A vigorous, healthy appetite, the invariable companion of my life, ever willing to step forward when called upon, and but too often over-zealous in appearing at the improper time, was in readiness as usual, without any artificial promptings, and I made a regular feast of the good things set before me, demolishing the rice and fowls in an appalling manner, and at an unprecedented rate of speed, by the light of two semi-fluid tallow dips stuck on the spike of a wooden stand by means of a thin reed thrust into the bottom end of the flavoury grease.

The sorry remains had scarcely been cleared away by that worthy factotum of ours when, as luck would have it, the wandering minstrel of the town, led by a boy (for that almost universal curse of the Chinese poor — ophthalmia — had robbed him of sight), took up his ground in the doorway and began first to tune and then to play on the three-stringed 'San hien' or banjo of his country — an instrument with a long neck traversed at one end by three projecting pegs, and a diminutive body at the other—of a cylindrical shape, covered with dusky brown and yellow-striped snake-skin, on which lay the dwarfish bridge sup-

porting the strings. He had well chosen his time and the humour of his audience; for, had he begun his strumming before, instead of after dinner, his entertainment would, a thousand chances to one, have got a somewhat unpromising reception. There he stood now, like a David harping before King Saul of the troubled mind, the long, well-shapen fingers of his left hand stretched over the thin silken cords of the antiquated construction that lay across his



Wandering Minstrels.

body; pressing them nimbly and gently at one extremity, or sliding upwards and downwards on the thin neck with the practised experience and grace of an *artiste*, while the right hand, with the end of the striking finger protected by a thin slip of bamboo, was busy plying the strings. This, of all the popular musical instruments in ordinary use amongst the Chinese, pleases me best; and though the airs the present performer treated us to were novel, and he was unacquainted

with those we asked him to play, and which are so much in vogue southwards, yet he managed to get through his solo in an unobjectionable, if not in a scientific manner. He acted the part of a musical physician in good earnest, introducing simple melodies with an unaffected execution as he beat time with his foot, bringing out the low notes clear and soft, slurring the short quick notes in the allegretto movements in a tremulous series of shakes, and with decided effect, darting his left hand from one end of the neck to the other in pleasant cadences, pauses, and fitful starts, and yet all in measured beat, 'putting the soul in tune,' and getting what he thought a good reward for his skill when he had finished.

The music of our friends is certainly curious and whimsical, and to a stranger very often sounds discordant, jerking, and disagreeable in the extreme—appearing as grotesque, but at the same time as indigenous to the *natale solum* of the black-haired race, as are their architecture, their garb, their manners and their shaven heads and pigtails; yet that they are a musical people, few who have mixed much among them, and patiently listened to a good performer on one of their most harmoniously attuned instruments, will deny. Almost every house we entered in North China boasted of its amateur and its weapon of torture, as some non-lovers of the dulcet-tones have termed the favourite article, in some shape or another; and in passing through the dark narrow streets in the evenings, one is sure to hear from the dimly-lighted houses the squealing, incoherent, and distorted vibrations tumbling out on the night air with a spasmodic reality and a foreignness of style that at once remind the listener of the outlandish country he is in. I remember one night, shortly after my arrival in Hongkong, listening in the almost silent street to a peripatetic musician, whom I thought—though it is but a hasty opinion at that early period of my sojourn in the land—a master of this three-stringed lute. I had never heard anything half so curious and wild as the sound of those shrill,

thrilling, weird-like notes echoing strangely in the vacant thoroughfare. There is a plaintive melancholy often permeating and controlling the more lively element in some of their airs which is peculiar as well as impressive, and touches somehow or other our most pleasant *souvenirs* of days gone by, particularly when played on the 'Shu tih,' a sort of clarionet — or rather, from its sharp and loud peals of ear-piercing intensity, a near approximation to the chanter of the Scottish bagpipe. At the funeral processions, the clang and din of the assembled gongs, blowing of horns, and bumping of tom-toms, cannot drown the long-drawn, half-savage sad melody poured out from the reed, around which the greater portion of the attendants and onlookers gather as they would around the narrator of a tale of woe, such a powerful ascendency does it exert over them; and I must confess it threw a spell over me, every tune becoming more and more potent.

None of those grand conceptions bestowed on the world by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Donizetti, Hummel, Handel, or Beethoven, to nearly all of whose masterpieces I have lent my enraptured attention, ever produced in me such unspeakable emotions of tenderness and plaintive melancholy as those which arose as I sat one midnight long ago on the banks of a Highland loch during the fishing season, when all nature seemed to be lulled to rest under the burnished silvery light of a summer moon. The finely-stippled surface of the bright expanse of water was only stained far out from the shore by sooty specks and streaks where the hardy fishermen had settled to their nocturnal occupation, and I dreamily gazed on the enchanting scene, where there was scarcely a sound except in the low and nearly inaudible sleepy murmur of the fretful surf, expecting — nay, looking — to see the fairest glades and moss-covered banks thronged by the benignant subjects — the etherealised heroes and heroines of many a Gaelic fairy tale: when, breaking through the nearly palpable stillness and hush of the hour, at first faintly palpitating on

the motionless air, as solemn and slow-paced it stole towards us across the loch, came a sorrowful dirge-like chant from one of the lonely fishing-boats, and as it thrilled far and wide through the tiny glens, crept wearily up the heathery hills, and returned again over the lustrous placid waters, it rose and fell in intensity as the taste and fancy of the piper led him in his appreciation and love of the theme on which he lavished so much expression. I at the time felt as if the notes could have proceeded only from the upper world, and when the air dwindled softly down to the saddest piano, it might have been the solitary complaint of some bereaved spirit in Hades; or when it swelled out in dismal pealing reverberations, I seemed to be hearing the agony-stricken wail of the Coronach, or the warning song of grief of the legendary *Dhuan Shee* boding death or misfortune to the clan or family to which it had clung for generations; and when it finally died away as tenderly as it had begun, and my entranced ear was disenthralled from the temporary spell, I was some time in believing that I was really awake, and had only been charmed into forgetfulness by a 'sprig' on Frank M'Callum's pipes. But though, before and since those happy days, I have been dinned, delighted, and distracted by pibrochs, strathspeys, and all the variations which can be appended to the entire catalogue of Celtic music, the air which threw me into an almost cataleptic state on that night, remains preserved in my memory in all its original simplicity and unalloyed genuineness of half-civilised natural expression, as told in pure pathos by a few notes on a simple instrument. Mackrimmon's Lament, 'We return no more,' continually interposes between my judgment and the favourable verdict I might give in regard to any modern symphony or elaborate production of a civilised and cultivated mind.

For many years I had not heard again my melancholy favourite, and little expected to do so until I revisited

'The land of brown heath and shaggy wood;'

when one spring afternoon, riding along the banks of the Peiho above Tien-tsin, the old sound suddenly overwhelmed me, and, though the notes I anxiously sought to catch were not exactly the same, and did not succeed each other in quite the identical rhythmical order, yet the resemblance was sufficiently startling and complete to accomplish the return of the spell. Stir I could not until the long ceremonious train of weeping relatives, sympathising friends, and curious spectators in robes of white, blue, or grey, with the emblematic banners and garish paraphernalia of a Chinese funeral, and the heavy encasement of the departed, who had saluted the world, and 'returned no more,' had vanished on the opposite side, over the plain, and away to some one of the countless burying-places spread everywhere in the vicinity of that city.

Music is said to have been invented by the versatile monarch who first reigned over the Sinæ, and to have for numerous centuries maintained a healthy sway over the minds and social virtues of the people — to such a degree, indeed, as to give origin to the saying, 'Would you know if a country is well governed or not, and whether the morals are good or bad, you have only to consider how music is cultivated in it.' It cannot have made much progress, nor can the culture to which it has been subjected have advanced it much beyond the limits of barbarianism, though the various contrivances devised for the propagation of the dulcet undulations betray no mean knowledge of its rudiments. Having gained this stage, however, there it was condemned to stick. If a Westerner applied his own maxim, the well-known quotation respecting 'He that hath no music in his soul,' to the dreadful caterwauling skirl that sets one's teeth on edge, and makes the hair-roots on one's scalp feel quite cold, scraped and tickled out of the

two-stringed 'urh heen'—the probable prototype of the violin—he would undoubtedly come to the conclusion that the moral chords in such a country must be very inharmonious, and that the Government was most atrociously out of tune. Let no one who has feasted his ears with the performances of an Ernst or a Sivori seek to be hurled from the sublime to the ridiculous while desiring to find music from such an instrument in the hands of a Chinese. I have hunted out the most likely performers in a large city, and have essayed, again and again, to bear with them while they were operating, but to no purpose. My sympathies were decidedly of the canine order, for I always felt inclined to howl at the entertainment.

It is even worse than when an unmusical, earless amateur commences to teach himself the principles of harmony on some tuneless cracked fiddle; and as for their vocal music, O infant Sapphos, past, present, and to come! O enchanting sirens! O matchless *prima donnas*, who nightly lead the hearts of men by their ears! permit us not to dignify such barbarous maltreatment of the human voice divine, by such a designation. Some one has said—I think it must be Williams in his 'Middle Kingdom'—that no European can imitate a Chinese warbler with any likelihood of success; but if North China furnishes any good vocalists—and we are certain it does—I beg most respectfully to dissent from this opinion, and to declare that, after a month's not very close application under the tuition of a 'native,' anyone furnished with lungs and a larynx sufficiently powerful to mimic cleverly the crowing of a robust dunghill cock, can sing a love romance *à la Chinoise* to perfection; for neither the finer organ nor the refinement of civilisation is needed to give the desired effect; but it would be unpardonable cruelty on my part to recommend anyone who has the quality of mercy about him, to ask to be initiated into such a dolesomely stridulous method, and one requiring such an

indubitably unedifying comportment. A Chinaman rehearsing a song looks and gives utterance to such goat-like bleats, that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that he is labouring under a violent attack of chronic hooping-cough, combined with intermittent seizures of hiccup—the 'dying falls' of the inhuman falsetto at the end of each verse finishing off in the most confounding hysterical perturbations of the vocal chords. It is but reasonable to suppose, from what we know of the character of the people, that their predilection for their native cranky music must be unbounded, and completely blinds them to the merits of that of other countries, in the which, if they accord to it any good at all, they certainly can never bring themselves to see any superiority.

Of this there was an instance told at Tien-tsin, where the servant of a missionary used often to attend the regimental bands when they performed at the Embassy, until his master, perhaps thinking that the congenial strains of other lands had after all some real attraction for the man of the Central Empire, one day quizzed him about his musical ideas and opinions, especially as to whether Chinese music was less pleasing to him than the harmony and skill exhibited by the British performers, and asking which he would prefer. He characteristically answered that both kinds of music were good, and bore a great similarity to each other, but that his own, having slightly the advantage, pleased him best.

Their turn for imitation, however, serves them well in this as in many other things, and where a few cash can be earned, the itinerant professors of Apollo's art are not slow to attempt the production of select pieces which they may have picked up from the French or English bands. In one of the most thronged streets I was, on an afternoon elbowing my way along, exploring the 'Heavenly Ford,' when the sound of a violin playing a well-known waltz fixed my

attention in a by-lane, and there, instead of a hairy Briton flourishing a bow over a Cremona, was a blind beggar eliciting these pleasant notes with as great precision and tone from the rude and unsightly mallet-shaped *urh heen*, as if he had been all his public life first violin at the Opera ballet.

'Dulcis sæpe ex asperis,' but we could never have been otherwise than incredulous if told that such an acidulous instrument, when giving forth the ordinary airs to please Coolie ears, could, from two strings, a piece of bamboo, and a bit of rough stick with a few horsehairs attached, compete with almost perfect instruments.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNCIVIL AND EXTORTIONATE LANDLORD — A ROW — PRESENTS — ADVANTAGES OF BEING WITHOUT AN INTERPRETER — ILL FEELING BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CHINESE — PEKING AND CANTON COOLIES — THREE ROADS — THE HAPPY MEDIUM — MARKET-DAY AT COO YUH — BUTCHER'S MEAT — PORK — CATTLE — LIVELY ROAD — FAMILY GROUPS — A TIEN-TSIN MERCHANT — POVERTY IN A SANDY REGION — RESPECTFUL RECOGNITION — BIRDS — 'THE BIRD OF JOY,' AND ITS TRADITION.

THERE was a regular fracas. We had made certain of our 'morning' of cold fowl, rice, and the flavoury decoction; anathematised the mulé-driver for his tardiness, and showered a hail-storm of harsh-sounding phrases on the bristly head of the groom, intended considerably to sharpen his sight and intellect, both of which, we had very good cause to suspect, had been materially affected by a night's gambling, and by potations of warm Samshu—alas! his Roman Catholic principles and religious education had not done much to correct these flaws in Chinese human nature.

The bill was produced, read, and negatived, to the intense disgust of the saturnine old crab-apple of a host, who had been lurking in a recess, watching us like a spider for a fly, and pounced out at the last moment with a miserable shred of common paper, on which was a cramped, confused, and botched list of all sorts of things, put down at four times the price we had paid at the other houses: this he unblushingly held up for M. to examine.

The craft of the man was sufficiently evident; he was clearly endeavouring to make us pay for the destruction of his infirm courtyard wall, levelled the evening before by the now

circumspect populace, who formed a wide circle around us while the question was being discussed whether one-half of the extortionate charge would suffice, or whether we must refer the whole business to a mandarin. He was also no doubt striving to obtain some compensation for the fright and rage he had been thrown into when the said structure toppled down, the consequences of which were yet apparent in his thin lips, scowling eyes, heaving breast, and sharp garrulous voice.

One might as well have reasoned with the winds as tried to convince him that his overcharge was unfair, and that we were not to be knowingly cheated. As little to the purpose was it to threaten the ill-tempered body with an appeal to a higher authority, for we were told that there was no mandarin or other functionary in the town, to whom we might resort for justice. A strong feeling of 'not to be done' caused one-half, nay, even two-thirds of the whole sum to be offered, if merely to show the bystanders that their townsman was not altogether what he ought to be, and that we, conscious of the fraud, were willing to make every concession in order to settle the dispute amicably; but the fellow was as obdurate as Shylock. The cables of cash were returned to the cart, and we began to move away.

This brought the business to a crisis: with a spring, the reins of Ma-foo's pony are clutched, and luckless Ma-foo is a prisoner in the grasp of the remorseless landlord, notwithstanding his noisy expostulations and fiery language. All along he had been demurring loudly against the imposition, and, like a faithful adherent who was not going to allow his masters to be cheated, advised us against giving any more than we had offered.

The bickering was now becoming serious, the morning was far advanced, and more brickbats might be mysteriously dropped in our vicinity, for I must confess candidly that I had no great amount of faith in the friendly disposition of the people we were wandering among; so, very reluctantly

indeed, the bill was paid in full, Ma-foo was released, and in a few minutes more we had left landlord, crowd, and town, never to see either of them again.

We now and often afterwards found reason to congratulate ourselves on what we at the time thought our bad luck in losing the services of the Canton interpreter at Tien-tsin—as he must have been a responsibility and incumbrance. I have often thought that a small party travelling through a strange country has a better chance of proceeding without mishap, than a large one, consisting chiefly of individuals who are rather clogs than aids. We should have had his quarrels to adjust whenever he, relying on his own superiority and acuteness, and the real or fancied invulnerability of the ægis under which he acted, presumed to dictate to the people with whom he came in contact, involving himself and us in needless squabbles, and bringing, perhaps, our trip to an abrupt and troublesome termination.

With this bumptious Boniface we should certainly have had a conflict that must have ended in bloodshed, had the volatile southern temperament come into play, for, from what transpired during and after the operations towards Peking, I should say that the feelings of animosity between the northmen and southmen were as bitter and malignant as could possibly exist between two portions of a great empire not quite at open war with each other: hence a Cantonese, instead of being, like ourselves, a source of curiosity and speculation, would be an object of dislike and alarm to the dwellers in every town and village in which we chanced to stay. Whether it is from the almost complete isolation of the two ends of this vast country from each other, and the stay-at-home nature of the race, generally engendering that narrowmindedness and supercilious vanity so noticeable among them, or from traditional antagonism of which we know nothing, there need be no hesitation in saying that they are as opposed to each other as the poles of a galvanic battery—as difficult to

mingle as oil and water, and, like the elements of gunpowder, need but a little spark to cause a violent separation.

The meridional Chinaman is far more than a match in force of intelligence, knavery, and artfulness in everything pertaining to mischief, than the native of higher latitudes and more limited intercourse with other nations. No sooner does he make his advent at Tien-tsin, or Shanghai, than the eyes and doubts of the comparatively simple-minded but suspecting natives are on the *qui vive*.

Every arrival is carefully noted and made known to the authorities, each new acquisition, or rather interloper, is viewed as a dangerous person, whom it is necessary to watch over and pounce upon, should robbery or riot disturb the every-day routine of the magisterial existence — and not undeservedly in many instances. The southern, in return, holds his more impassive rival in thorough contempt, and, dignifying him with the scornful appellation of 'stupid cow,' is always ready and willing to take advantage of his stupidity or simplicity, thinking it no sin to plunder and rob, whenever a favourable chance can be seized.

Could anything more forcibly exhibit this unbrotherly, unpatriotic tendency than the conduct of the rapscallions enlisted about Hongkong, Canton, and Whampoa, for the invasion of their own capital city? They were dubbed for the nonce the 'Coolie corps,' or more appropriately the 'Bamboo Rifles,' in compliment, probably, to the expert and effective manner in which they handled and loaded those very sturdy and becoming weapons, with which they were armed; perhaps, also, to the care bestowed in teaching them to perform one or two very becoming but very elementary fragments of drill by Europeans from line regiments. They wore a uniform almost rivalling, in the luxuriance of its gaily-corded tunic and double-striped trousers, that of a light dragoon!

They were crafty slaves, within whose breasts hung hearts

that beat only when spoil was in view, and they possessed souls so dead to love of country and natural feeling, that they exulted in seeing and assisting in the defeat of their country's armies. It was generally believed that they possessed in an eminent degree the quality of ferreting out the recesses in which were concealed the little wealth of sycee silver, furs, or other valuables, secreted by their brethren before they fled from their homes; and that they were as ready to lend their assistance to those who were moved by a similar desire for 'loot,' as pillage is sometimes called, as if China was not their native land, and the trinkets and garments plundered were not those belonging to the people of the same blood and flesh with themselves! How cuttingly, too, did these renegades renounce all sympathy for the Pekinese and the peasantry around the capital in their scoffs and jeers and trenchant remarks—towards men, too, far their superiors in manliness, each able to vanquish in fair fight any two of their number!

These deserters from the paternal roof came as conquerors, of course, and while they showered their pungent sarcasms on their compatriots, they borrowed whatever might be useful or profitable to themselves without the slightest reference to the owners. For the amusement or advantage of their employers, who were unacquainted with the amount of slang and opprobrium the flowery language is capable of affording, some of these recreants laboured hard to express their sentiments in unobjectionable English, generally mingling their vituperations with sly hints as to their own desires. How far they succeeded we could never learn, though we remember a species of cantata, adapted to a thin quavering air — a favourité — which, like many songs I have heard elsewhere, afforded me but little chance of understanding anything beyond the music, and that was difficult enough. The words of the refrain — rendered intelligible to 'outside' ears

by their continual repetition—were exceedingly popular among the minor Celestials, who could acquire nothing more than—

'Peking coolie no can do,
Canton coolie no samshu.'

This, while it indicated the scarcity of the fiery spirit that was needed to cheer and inebriate them at times, was launched out as a *coup-de-grâce* to the reputation of not only the Peking men in particular, but those who were impressed for service on the march from Tien-tsin. The latter, it must be admitted, at that time, were either very averse or very much afraid to give the army their labour, even on payment, and lost no advantage in 'whilo-ing,' as the phrase went, when they left unceremoniously: hence their additional unworthiness in the estimation of the ballad-mongers. They required a respectable guard of grey-turbaned Punjaubees to protect them from external dangers and guard them against those inconvenient eccentricities which were so often at work in forcing them to deviate from the proper track. So that the loss of one, who, by his greater or less proficiency in the language of the districts we had to pass through, might have served us in obtaining much more information than we could hope to guess at by our own efforts, was quite counterbalanced by the advantage of not being made accountable for his actions, and embroiled in the disturbances likely to arise from party animosity.

From Kia-ping—as we discovered, after having been made mystified about their direction—three roads diverge to the Great Wall, and to the only gate near the waters of the Gulf through which access can be had to the province of Liautung beyond: the upper one, the 'Shan ta-tau,' or Hill high road, running to Funing and Yung-ping, the departmental city of the most eastern portion of the province of Chihli, south of the Wall, bearing the same name as the city; the middle road, the 'Chung ta-tau,' which is the most direct,

leading through Lanchow; and the 'Toong hi-tau,' the eastern ocean road, sweeping away down the low land encircling the bay.

Each of these highways has its advantages, according to the season of the year and the state of the weather—the Hill road, though more circuitous, and perhaps more uneven, being passable at all times; the middle one tolerably so on fine days; but the Gulf one is always uncertain, except when the long severe winters have frozen lake, marsh, and pool into a firm consistency; then travellers and traffic may make it preferable to the others, because of its being more level and less stony.

Our cartman—who was engaged for the journey, not by the number of days—chose the centre road, the 'Chung yung' or Happy Medium, this suiting his disposition and pocket better than the high or the low routes: though my disappointment was considerable when I found that the city of Yung-ping would not come within twelve or thirteen miles of the nearest part of this track.

The road was none of the easiest or best, sometimes winding quite close to the foot of the hills and climbing over ledges of rock, which threatened wheels and axletree with immediate dislocation or fracture, and taxing to the utmost the endurance and strength of the mules; at others ploughing away round the protruding angle of an erratic spur down into great hollows, where mud and water lay deep, or thumping over the stony shelves that stood across the path, denuded of earth, and slippery.

At thirty li from Kia-ping we reached the cosy little town of Coo-yuh, and on a market-day; for at its busiest hour we found ourselves struggling through a crowd of agriculturists and traders. They occupied every crammable corner, and wedged each other so tightly into the middle of the narrow street that they could scarcely extricate themselves from the stalls, from the piles of goods heaped up on each side of the

thoroughfare, and from the live stock kicking, squealing, bleating, lowing, and neighing on every hand.

Here business was being transacted by staid, bargain-making, healthy old men, clad in sober homespun blue or white cotton stuff, and the great brimmed straw hat scarcely attached to their venerable heads by bands of black tape. They were buying or selling to the best advantage, without much talk or display: their sonsy brown faces, looking as if they had never known care, poverty, or deceit, were set off by long thin silvery moustaches and beards; and their erect figures, broad chests, and square shoulders, betrayed no mark of city depravity, and gave promise of many long years of useful toil.

Speculations and questionable ventures were sparkling in the eyes of the younger negotiators, who, attired in their best outfits—consisting of a maximum of silk, and a minimum of the less pretentious material, with clean-shaven heads, and long, well-plaited, glistening queues, too elaborate to be protected from the great heat by any sort of covering—talked loudly and long, and strutted around their customer, or around the stock in which they were about to invest their capital, using their fans in the most coquettish manner, far more for display than for any real benefit to their olive complexions.

The more wealthy farmer, the owner of but a small plot, and the day labourer, all mingled and bargained, bought and sold, in the quietest and readiest manner possible, without disturbance, and, so far as we could see in such a dense crowd, without those preservers of the peace in Hesperian markets and fairs—the lynx-eyed policemen.

Stalls, shaded by square-topped white cotton umbrellas, which nearly knocked our heads off in consequence of our not stooping low enough to pass beneath them, were shaking beneath every kind of native produce; and long rows of sacks stood on end with open mouths, exhibiting their

contents, perfectly lined each side of the way. Beans, pease, wheat, barley, and millet, were the staple articles exposed for sale. Baskets full of fresh and salted vegetables; stands laden with home-made cotton cloth, coarse, but thick and durable; or great bundles of the white flocculent material ready for spinning; little stores of alum or sal-ammoniac; all sorts of hardware and pottery of native manufacture; tailoring and shoemaking booths; while harness and saddlery hung over all the poles and pegs of the saddlers' compartment. There were tempting displays of large-sized, well-coloured, but very deceptive flavourless apples, and hard, watery pears, with an abundant and more acceptable assortment of peaches, apricots, and nectarines, in which we indulged greatly, and filled pockets and saddlebags.

There were butchers cutting and chopping at the legs and bodies of well-dressed pigs, slain for the occasion; and, better than all, a sight which made our gustatory nerves fairly tingle: there were delicious legs of the 'yang row'—the mutton, about which we had enquired, fruitlessly, at every halting-place, fresh and glowing in its delicate tints of white and red.

At these we make a dead set. We leave Ma-foo to purchase the choicest ribs and cutlets he can see, for really we can stand the rushing and crushing no longer. Having become the focus and centre of attraction to everybody, all trade is suspended, stalls deserted, and we are hemmed in by a heaving herd of pragmatical creatures, who almost devour us with anxious curiosity and wonderment; threatening impending overthrow to all movables in the vicinity, and terrifying the keepers of sundry cooking and eating establishments, where square fids of cheesy-looking bean curd, and tremulous milky-coloured slices of starch jelly, are enticingly laid out ready for the hissing, spluttering pan; piquant spreads of the most savoury combinations are also waiting to be served up to the hungry dealers, who now entirely forget

the danger to which they expose them, in their mad hurry to get a peep at us.

So we move along, as civilly and politely as the heat and press will admit, noticing here and there that behind the stalls are good shops and houses, with clean exteriors; high stone walls, enclosing some residences of a superior class; while, conspicuous over all the sign-boards, is that of the pawnbroker.

At the end of the street, on one side, lie, as still as if dead, scores of tender porklings and mature porkers, their locomotion prevented by their fore legs having been tied back over their shoulders securely enough to forbid their using them ever so little; while a tall, almost black, drover — a very model of a pork-eater — in the meanest costume, tends the bristly flock with a long whip, which however seems to be but little required.

At the other side is the pony, mule, and donkey market, and, perchance, that also for cattle, where the knowing ones are showing off the animals they are disposed to part with, while the buyers are carefully examining, in the sunshine and in the shade, the eyes of their intended purchases, attentively handling the limbs of their beasts, running them up and down the rough street, with and without a rider, wheeling and twisting and flogging them about, or gagging the vicious, in order to scan their teeth and learn their age.

The spots where the smaller articles are sold become fewer; the wares are more promiscuous and less in demand; wedges of dye-stuff are mixed with thread and tinware, and even confectionary; the houses have gaps of garden between, and become scarce; until, in a few minutes more, we are again in the country.

We have passed through a town strikingly resembling one of our own, in some of our more remote rural districts during market day. Under some spacious trees I await the arrival of the groom with the provisions for our midday treat; but,

when he appears, the silly fellow brings nothing, having forgotten that the money was in the cart, and that this was now a good mile ahead, with no chance of its being overtaken until it had gone half a mile farther.

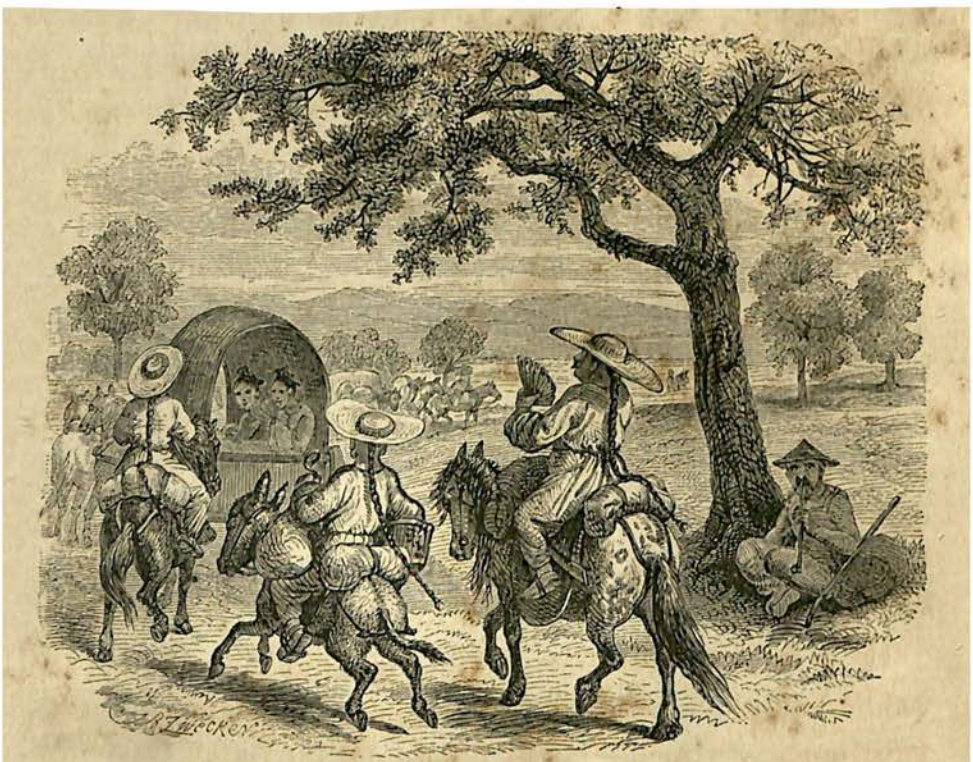
Grievously bemoaning our disappointment, and trying to suppress a feeling of resentment towards the cause of it, we hurried on.

For some distance the road was lively enough — strings of carts laden with marketable stuff, and long single files of pack-ponies, going to or returning from the town, creaked and clattered along. Presently one or two long, stiff, lumbering platforms on wheels rumbled slowly by, freighted with family traps. Yellow and wrinkled matrons were perched on bundles of straw, and mindfully shielded from jar or shock by pillows and cushions disposed around them. They were out for the day, and were evidently got up in their best style; dear old creatures! looking as cheerful as if their lives had ever been all sunshine, and chatting in a vivacious vein, smirking towards their husbands or friends, who may have been flattering their little vanities, as they cuddled near them. With the most seductive grace imaginable, they sat in the jolting cart stiffly done up in their blue silk pelisses or jackets, with wondrous long wide sleeves, disclosing bare necks, large earrings pendent from the small, well-shapen ears, and hair gathered up on the crown like the handle of a shovel. It was perforated by silver skewers, and gaily decked out with complimentary-coloured flowers.

A daughter or young wife would sometimes be of the party; but, alas! her natural beauty must needs be eclipsed by the employment of most unsightly cosmetics, though her coiffure might display more taste than that of the elderly ladies, in having, instead of the shovel handle, a long scoop like a shoe-lift, done up from before and behind on the top

of the head, and two winglike expansions gummed out in the finest cohesiveness on each temple.

These little family groups were pleasant to meet, they seemed so light-hearted; and we could not but regret that our uncouth presence startled them into the gravest propriety; even so far as to make the younger and fairer Hebes avert their painted faces in the most tantalising manner, and to transmute the loquacious, sprightly old dames into



People returning from the Market.

severely demure grandmothers. They dared not turn their countenances in our direction while we looked at them; though their quick dark eyes were busy enough wheeling outwards and inwards, squinting violently, as our position or the irregularities of the road required. When their backs were turned on us, as often as we chanced to look after them, their countenances displayed an irrepressible longing to see what was behind them.

Then would come a gang of male travellers trudging under little loads, with rush or cane hats partially concealing their faces; then a troop of donkey-riders scudding along at a furious rate, on the smallest but hardiest of native Jerusalems, to the jingling music of fancy bell-collars, with which those willing little long-hoofed animals are furnished; their great fat bodies swaying backwards and forwards, and the extensive flexible straw brims of their hats flapping up and down like the sails of a windmill in an unsteady breeze.

Alone, further away from the noise and bustle, a stray Chinaman proceeded, sliding along easily on the shadiest side of the road, the pony he bestrides never advancing beyond a mild dog trot. This the solid even-minded rider could endure for hours, day after day; and perhaps such may be his present intention, for he is in what we might term complete marching order, that is, he is dressed in the ordinary way with the umbrageous hat, a fan—the never absent attendant—stuck behind his neck, and the cool white cotton jacket and trousers. In addition, there is a sword and a very large dark-painted paper umbrella secured under one thigh; behind him, rolled up into a sort of valise, is a large sheet of yellow waterproof paper or cotton for a rainy day.

He straddles widely over the pyramid formed by the saddle and the carpet rug, which by day accommodates, in two immense pouches on each side, all his bulky travelling equipment. This now incommodes those cleanly-attired legs very much, but at night it gives him a soft bed in the roadside inn, when without it he would have to rest uneasily upon the bricks. Mounted on this pillion, with a well-filled tobacco-pouch, from the neck of which sticks out the long black stem of the pipe dangling at his side, he looks a very happy pilgrim indeed.

Another town with an almost unpronounceable, and certainly unwriteable name, is passed through without displaying anything to commend it to our notice. We here had

a rencontre with a Tien-tsin merchant on a small scale, who had, strange to say, found his way to such a far-off place. As soon as the alarm of our approach was raised, he bounced out of a shop, stopped and saluted us with the familiar 'chin chin,' as if glad to see us, and made one or two abortive attempts to get up a conversation in the diabolical Canton-English. He produced an effect on the spectators very different to that he intended, for, in reply to all the questions we asked him, he could only muster the monosyllable 'yes,' and looked very confused and silly. Notwithstanding, we were right glad to observe that he was neither ashamed nor afraid to acknowledge his acquaintanceship with the strangers, and this so far augured well for our enterprise.

The incomprehensible road again bent away round towards the hills, rising higher and changing the character of the scenery; but to its disadvantage. The sand becomes finer and deeper, and invades the fields; the crops become stunted and thin, and cultivation is on the wane everywhere. As an inevitable concomitant, the villages begin to lose their bright aspect; the houses showing too frequently neglect and indifference in the unsightly blocks of undressed stones heaped on each other, without any regard to building or plastering; and on these rude walls rested roofs quite flat or but slightly concave—a proof of the dryness of the climate, at any rate.

The people, too, are very poor and squalid, and the naked children encased in layers of mud and dirt. Yet, in this unlikely place, attention is paid to education, and there are schools in the poverty-haunted temples, through the open doors of which little soiled faces and ragged suits can be discerned, and humdrum sing-song infantile voices send out their lessons in chorus—as we remember they did some years ago, and may do now, in infant schools at home.

The sand reached its limit at last on the outskirts of a

straggling hamlet, and before us there scarcely appeared anything but a rusty-coloured sheet of crunching sand, denying sustenance to every living thing; fortunately for our little party, now lying treacherously still; but only awaiting the slightest puff of a north-east wind to whirl up into the air, and cover everything within miles of its present bed with a coverlet of siliceous dust.

When the breeze wantonly shakes the tree-tops around the homesteads away down in the rich plain, the heavier substratum of angular chips and pebbles will be scattered with violence against the badly-built tenements up here, and cut, damage, and ruin the sickly fields of millet or maize.

But on the edge of this waste, just where the red fiery hue begins to change into a warm yellow, and that again to melt into a cool faint green, long strips of shrivelled willows have been planted, and between their supporting stems thick rows of hardy shrubs, in which the drifting grit has found a lodgement, and formed banks of a sufficient height to offer a tolerably secure impediment to the incursions of the devastating shoals. This allows the ground behind them to be reclaimed and stocked with such plants as it may for the time be capable of bearing. How exactly in this device the Chinese have imitated Nature in making use of the only vegetation that would live in and bind together the fickle material into a stationary soil! On our own east coast we have seen the useful sea reed, or marrun grass, perform the same office unaided by man, and cementing the drifting sand into immovable banks, which sheltered the country beyond. Here the farmer had an advantage, though in all likelihood he never saw the plan adopted by Nature, for he had so arranged his nursery that the whole of the growing fence faced the impelling wind, and made every bush serviceable in meeting it and entangling its burthen.

No one was stirring on the road save odd, gipsy sort of men, who may have been looking for employment at some

one of the farms, or biding their time to purloin the wherewithal to furnish a meal. Once we dropped on a dusty soldierlike young man, hobbling away on a pony, who unfolded his tail from around his head and jerked it down between his shoulders when he saw us,— the second mark of respectful recognition we had met during the day; at another time a passenger cart passed us, of the ordinary workhouse-hearse shape; and, on the driver giving the signal, the front screen was raised, and a snuffy-nosed old gentleman, wearing a monstrous pair of spectacles, stuck out his head like a Jack-in-the-box, and took full advantage of the few seconds allowed him to view the strangers, barbarians, whatever he chose to consider us.

The landscape did not gain much in beauty as we toiled slowly on. The irregularity of the country gave the mules more collar and breeching work than they seemed to appreciate, the driver requiring to use rather frequently his stinging whip, and tur-r-r and chuck, to incite their dormant energies to action. Often the narrow road dipped low between deep cuttings in the high sand-banks, and then stood almost erect over the sloping side of a granite or limestone ridge, from which the great wide plain became discernible, with pretty valleys, perfect gardens of verdure, lying softly far down to the south; carpets of harvest, toning from the golden yellow through every gradation down to the darkest green, streaked in lengthy bands by the russet-brown beds of rivers and streams now dry and bare, that intersected the rich expanse.

At one part of the way, where the humblest cottage could not be ventured upon as a building,— so bleak and exposed was it between two high hills,— a good number of gloomy pines grew, throwing up flat circular tops like nothing else I can think of but a round table; and a scattered tithe of cypress and elm. On the velvety grass beneath them ran and fed an uncommonly large flock of crested larks, so pertina-

ciously keeping to the ground that, do all we could, they would scarcely take wing. Here also the pied and the scarlet-headed woodpecker flitted quickly from tree to tree as they were roused by our footsteps; the extremely elegant little hoopoe, with its arched crest of ruddy-buff feathers and long curved bill, coquetted with us as we tried to obtain a nearer look at it, alighting on the ground and commencing to toy with some juicy sod until we had got to within a short distance, then playfully perching on the branch of a tree when the prescribed interval between us had been reached.

More numerous than any other of the winged stock of North China (though they can scarcely be so plentiful as in Ireland), there were numbers of the cunning, disreputable, white-scapulared magpies sagely eyeing our movements from every branch of nearly every tree, and leisurely calculating their chance of being disturbed before fluttering a feather. We have always held the saucy fellow in great esteem, for does not his chattering remind us that the accomplished daughters of Pierus were, by the offended Muses, metamorphosed into the social but songless 'Pica Caudata,' for no other reason than that they challenged the tuneful Nine to a vocal competition; and have we not all sorts of superstitions about him as a bird of omen?

Among the people through whose country we are seeking to travel a few hundred miles, he is no less a favourite; and, as well as being ominous of good or evil, he is supposed to be and is named the 'Bird of Joy,'—a designation that may have come in with the present dynasty, who have, if the legend in which this bird plays such a prominent part is to have any weight, very much to thank it for.

Can we offer any reason why we should doubt the truth of the tradition, when the liberal and enlightened Emperor Kien Lung, of Lord Macartney's time,—the scholar sovereign of the Mantchu race,—believed and asserted that the Kin,—the 'golden tribe'—a savage and illiterate horde,

— the ancestors of the Mantchus, and who, between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, expelled the Leang dynasty* from the northern provinces of China, and with the Sung dynasty divided the sway of the empire, from which they were driven before the conquering Mongols, and chased into the recesses and fastnesses of the wild Songari and Usuri valleys, where they must have suffered greatly—owed their origin to one Kioro — a wonderful character — who was born of a celestial virgin in the mystic shades of their unknown country?

When North China was contemptuously said by the early and then comparatively refined Chinese to be tenanted by 'demons and devils,' as many years before the Christian era as have elapsed since, the traditional genealogy wanders back, and it is thus recorded in their chronology. The first supernatural intimation of the subsequent glory of the family was given at Chang pih Shan,—the 'Long White Mountain,' — which is alleged to be more than 250 li, or upwards of sixty miles high! On the summit of this very lofty mountain was a lake twenty-seven miles in circumference, from which sprung three rivers; and near this lake it was intimated by an unearthly voice that 'This land will produce a holy man, who shall unite in one all nations!'

At the foot of the mountain was a pool of water, to which, the story says, three divine females came to bathe. One day, after the customary ablution (what a pity the modern Celestials do not follow the cleanly example thus set them), a spiritual bird,—the enchanted magpie,—with a peculiar sort of fruit in its bill, flew towards them, and, with a sapient eye for beauty, selected the loveliest damsel, named Ke, and slyly smuggled the gift it bore into her garments, where she soon discovered it. Presently, unable to resist its tempting

* In the books of whose reign it is mentioned that an extraordinary custom prevailed which excited great attention, 'that people sat with their legs hanging down,' that is, they began to sit on chairs or stools.

appearance, she consigned it to her mouth, and thence to her stomach; but with the most unlooked-for and disastrous results, for, instead of being affected by the unhealthy fruit, as we have been by what we have purchased and devoured in the market town, she immediately brought forth a son, who could speak as soon as he was born!

In this respect he far excelled the third patriarchal emperor of the 'distant country of the Seres,' who is reported to have been able to talk as soon as he was weaned from the breast—was elected to the throne at twelve years of age, and soon after discovered the invaluable properties of—

> 'That trembling vassal of the Pole,
> The feeling compass, Navigation's soul;'

and whose person and figure were beyond all parallel.

To this precocious prodigy Kioro, the same mysterious voice that had prognosticated his birth said, 'Heaven has borne you to tranquillise disordered nations.'

After his birth his deified, but rather heartless mother disappeared, and the boy, having strong inclinations towards self-preservation, constructed a barque, in which he placed himself, and, like another Moses, was floated down by the current of a certain river to a distant shore. He ascended the bank, broke off willows, with which he framed a seat, and when it was finished, having nothing else to do, he sat down in the wilderness, where he might have remained to this day, had it not happened that in the new land there were contending chieftains, who fought, and, as a natural and inevitable sequence, hurt and killed to a large extent.

One of these sanguinary savages went to the river to draw water, and on the way beheld our hero calmly surveying, from his willow throne, all the country around, to which he had, no doubt, in his own opinion, an indisputable right. Hurrying back, he lost no time in spreading the marvellous news,

and described the astonishing appearance of the stranger. The people speedily mustered and marched down to interrogate the marvellous child as to his name and surname, pedigree, and intentions towards them: to all of which queries he said, 'I was born of the Celestial female, Foo-koo-lun (was he ashamed of his parent's original name? or had he forgotten it? or had she, in order the better to escape justice, given him a fictitious one?), and am ordained by Heaven to settle your disordered state.'

'Heaven has brought forth a holy one,' they exclaimed; and forthwith endowed him with the dignity and attributes of a sovereign.

Under his auspices and guidance they fixed their abode at the city of Go-to-le, in the uninhabited wilderness of Go-han-hwuy, to the east of the Long White Mountain; from whence they named their country Man-chow.

But it seems that the tutelary magpie's functions were not to be dispensed with for some time to come; for it happened after this that the people of Man-chow rebelled, reversed and smashed the constitution, and in their violence slew all the members of the reigning family with the exception of one boy, who was named Fan-cha-kin. He fled into the forests to save his life. He was closely pursued by the destroyers, who would soon have settled his claims, had not the bird of good omen, in the nick of time, alighted on his devoted head, and sitting there, as audaciously cool as he now does on that ragged pine branch, deceived the anxious eyes of the hunters. They, spying his black head, neck, and breast—so richly glossed with green, purple, and blue—and the unsullied white portions of his breast and wings, resting motionless on an old rotten trunk of a tree—as they believed—went off in another direction.

In this way the original family was preserved from extinction, and the lustrous-plumaged, mischievous magpie is honoured with the happy appellation, and humoured in its

wanton freaks instead of being destroyed, while the Tartars are said to commemorate on the spot the incident in which it so seasonably averted the entire destruction of the Pure Dynasty.*

* Morrison's Chronology.

CHAPTER XI

THE TOWN OF LANCHOW — A NATURAL FOOTED BEAUTY — NATIVE MERCHANT — EATING HOUSES — THE LAN-HO — AN ARCADIA — BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE — TRAVELLING SOLDIERS — GREEDY BOATMEN — A *BEAU SABREUR* — HIS FRIENDLY INTERPOSITION — THE SNUG INN AT SHIH MUN — NORTH CHINA DWELLINGS, AND THEIR PECULIARITIES — GARDENS — STONE AND BRICK — ABSENCE OF MONUMENTS AND PAUCITY OF SCULPTURE.

ONCE more the road takes a dive downwards towards a better class of houses, set off by a group of fine old weeping willows, wheels round them—again ascends, and behold, far before us, and rather to our right on the very top of a commanding hill, rising high above the surrounding level, stands nobly out from the sky the Pharos-like pagoda of Lanchow, very much resembling indeed, from our point of view, a majestic lighthouse perched on a bold headland, with its closely-aggregated, projecting eaves stuck out from its sides as if it were the petrified body of a mammoth centipede. This edifice was an excellent landmark, as our course lay through the town of Lanchow, and nothing further was required but to take the first by-lane or path that led off in its direction. It proved a good two hours' ride, through, at first, segregated farm steadings, slowly improving the farther we bent into the plain—then neat cottages gathered between them, and at last orchard, garden, paddock, and village entirely supplanted the wide fields—becoming tree-shaded lanes wound out and in, doubled back and twisted forward, until extrication from the pleasant maze looked all but feasible.

A greater turn than usual carried us within sight of a

high parapeted brick wall, with two-storied towers at each angle, almost hid in the foliage of massive old willows growing within the enclosure. Between us and the wall was a wide strip of bare shingly ground, that might have been the old bed of a river, and in front, in the middle of the crenelated wall, was the gateway. This we made for, fully resolved to inspect the interior of the town, in spite of mobbing and dust raising. As everything was externally tranquil—indeed, we saw no one stirring—our apprehensions were not strong on these points.

Scarcely had we crossed the open and reached the entrance when a good-looking young woman, leading a little boy, emerged from the archway. Too late to turn back without betraying alarm or fear, and too modest to advance until we had passed beyond, she undecidedly took up her stand on the narrow ledge of stonework that served as a foundation to the heavy mass of the wall, and gave us the undeniable pleasure of her countenance with the most imperturbable self-possession and yet inquisitive timidity. She must have been a 'Tartar,' or a violent innovator on the prevailing customs and costumes, or offender against the sumptuary laws that sway the feminine as well as the masculine tastes of the Chinese, for she infringed the first in undauntedly, yet not indelicately, turning her face full on us, and half-smilingly ogled us in fair return for the stare we could not help being guilty of under such dazzling temptation. Oh, those glancing orbs! no other eyes could compare with them in brightness, and no words could express their splendour. It is needless to say that—

> 'Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
> But gaze on that of the gazelle,
> It will assist thy fancy well,
> As large, as languishingly dark,
> But soul beamed forth in every spark,
> That darted from beneath the lid,
> Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.'

The description is inadequate. All I can say is, that the fascination of those dark twinklers exceeded anything I had beheld in the East—it was something more splendid and gloom-dispelling than 'wavy ripples.' In addition to such attraction, were cheeks like the almond flower, lips like the peach's bloom, eyebrows as the willow leaf; and, when she moved to a more comfortable standing-place, footsteps like the lotus flower. The contour of the face was slightly oval, the features regular and pleasing, with no tendency to the pug nose and coarse lips one sees every day in the streets. There was, too, such a sweet dimpled chin! But, greatly to our chagrin, it wore a glaring mask of paint and powder—sailing ambitiously under false colours. That comely face and faultlessly chiselled neck, and the womanly brow that must have been fair before, are all grievously soiled with gypsum or some other blanching substance spread over them; a rather strong and irregular tinge of carnation ornaments each cheek, and the small mouth is made a little too conspicuous by the large daub of crimson placed on the middle of the pouting underlip; the eyebrows are gracefully embowed into a thin crescentic line of intense black, that overhung lids not deformed by too much of the almond-shaped slit between them; at their inner corners on the base of the nose is a small circular patch of vermilion, and a larger one on each temple.

From each of the exquisitely moulded ears hung a heavy ring of jade-stone of the real 'fait-sooay' colour. The hair—sleek and dark—is gathered up in two bows on each side, and the back hair hangs in a long plait down the back, while between the bows flutters a large blue butterfly on the slightest movement of her head, setting off this style of wearing the hair in quite an artful way.

The neck was uncovered—unless by the paint—and the whole of the figure, except just the bottoms of a pair of

light pink trousers, was hid by a long wide robe of figured blue silk, bound with white, on which a perfect menagerie of birds and beasts was embroidered. The cuffs of the very roomy sleeves were turned up with the same material, on which a landscape of some kind or other was delineated by the same laborious method.

The little feet—thanks be to fate—were natural, and nicely exhibited in a pair of shoes that, for brightness of hue and elegance of design in the flowers that covered them, might have been borrowed from the choicest collection in the Sultan's harem; though the clumsy addition of a thick white cloggy sole, in shape like a small inverted pyramid, did not quite satisfy us in the hasty survey we were making.

The only hand we could see was that by which she led the child — who watched us uneasily, lolling a finger about in its mouth — but that was a perfect model of beauty, and white as beauty could require, though the nails — we could notice — were perhaps a trifle too long, and moreover were dyed a brownish-yellow by the red Fungseën flower — a little piece of vanity, by the bye, introduced during the Sung dynasty, some eight or nine centuries ago — and to which, if we are not mistaken, the Turkish ladies at Constantinople and the Tartar girls in the Crimea are rather partial. The wrist was encircled by a white jade-stone bracelet.

The costume struck us as an easy and a graceful one — barring those thick soles to the handsome slippers — with the colours well assorted as to harmony. Nor was the get-up of the hair to be cavilled at; it must have cost an infinity of time and patience. In brief, those magnificent eyes and that softly-elegant cast of features, constituted a peculiar kind of beauty, of which in China we had hitherto met no example.

The havoc created in our susceptible hearts would have

been all but irreparable had that vile abomination of paint been removed, and the natural tint of the complexion been allowed to enhance the lady's other charms :

'If ladies be but young and fair,
They have the gift to know it.'

Our *bella donna* was no exception to the rule, for with an arch smile and a pert toss of the head, and another bewildering glance from the eyes, she enlightened her admirers as to her own opinion of her attractions.

The high gateways, by which it was necessary we should pass before getting into the town, were in perfect condition. They had been built with an eye to durability; and the thick nail-studded gates that opened on little wooden wheels, and were now fastened by bolts to the cheeks of the arches, showed no marks of decay. Like many, if not all, of the walled towns of the north, Lanchow is encompassed by a nearly square wall, each side of which faces one of the cardinal points, and is furnished with a double gateway. The outer one pierces the side of a wide semicircular, crenelated bastion, and leads to a partially paved court, from which the inner one led, at an acute angle to the other, through the straight line of wall into a principal street. The usual two-storied rampart towers, with their picturesque curled-up gables to each story, though untenanted and slightly in want of repair, were not in ruins.

Within the inner gate, at the commencement of the street in which we found ourselves, was a small wooden house, before which an old man sat betattered and dreamy, smoking —the guard of the city gate—and, in all human probability, the sole representative of what may once have been a garrison —the only tangible relic of a mythical ten thousand—looking as sorry, and rust-eaten, and inefficient as the half-dozen lances, pikes, halberds, and grappling hooks reared *in terrorem* in a shaky wooden stand near him on the roadside.

Though belonging to a second-rate city or town, the square enceinte did not appear to be more than one and a half or one and three-quarters of a mile in circumference, and Lanchow, unlike every other town we have seen similarly fortified, possessed no suburb—all trade and stir was within the embrace of the lofty structure, which seemed degraded and out of harmony with the interior, and must have been erected for the protection of better houses and more valuable property than now meet the eye on the sides of the wide street.

Its commercial transactions can only be insignificant, for the shops, though tolerably large and good, and the shopkeepers generally well-dressed and *fat*—an infallible index of their prosperous condition—were few, and the counters and shelves displayed nothing but native goods.

This may not be the case long, however, for one of the mob of spectators who thronged from every lane and door to stare at us, advanced frankly from among his neighbours and told us, in as much of the *lingua franca* as his business vocations had permitted him to pick up from the British, that he was a 'Tien-tsin merchant.' He was glad to enter into a brief conversation, in which both parties endeavoured to serve themselves—the one in discovering our object in travelling such a great distance from the Tien-tsin garrison, and the other in ascertaining the most convenient resting-place for the night, which was approaching rapidly.

It sounded strange to hear this fellow attempting to converse in English in this place, where Briton never had been before, and to watch the avidity with which those who clung to his skirts listened and tried to repeat the words after him, as if they had found the key to a new puzzle, highly amusing and curiously wonderful—but such incongruous sounds were more likely to excite mirth than meditation.

Lanchow is great in its kitchens and eating-houses, if it does not boast of an extensive trade; and the exhibition the citizens make by their ample preparations for a numerous

dining-out population impresses us as novel. There were spacious apartments crowded with little tables and stools arranged for parties of four or five. Independent family coteries were assembled for the purpose of drinking tea, and chewing the seeds of the water-lily, which a lad is anxiously employed in roasting at one of the outside stove-pans, tossing and turning them over the hot metal and mixing them with a coarse meal or sawdust to prevent their being unequally done—others were waiting for the highly-seasoned olios and powerfully aromatic stews that were squealing, bubbling, and boiling, in every row of cauldrons on the earthen pavement, over which the fat blue-aproned cooks stood steaming and blowing in the vapoury but delectable clouds, while little urchins pulled and pushed the horizontal bellows-handles to accelerate the speed of the culinary operations. In some these were only beginning, in others they were drawing to an embarrassing close—if the frequent tastings, and lip-smackings, and supervening cogitations are symptomatic of that epoch in the life of a *maître de cuisine* in other countries—but all went on out of doors and in the unmitigated sunny glare.

It did not take long to leave the east gate of the city behind us—we had entered by the west—and we were again among the pleasant gardens and whirling under the arborescent shade, where old and young were scraping, picking, and irrigating so assiduously as not to heed our intrusion.

After about half a mile's marching and countermarching, seemingly to no purpose, the leafy intricacy was penetrated, and we got a full view of the lovely plain through which the Lan-hô river flows. It was a highly gratifying sight, that right well repaid us for the little hardships we had encountered, and was worthy of the praises bestowed on it; willingly indeed we declared that it far excelled all those snatches of pleasant scenery to be met with around Peking, on which we had lavished eulogiums of a very exalted character, after the dismal muddy days we had passed at the mouth of the Peiho.

This river, the Lan-hô, may yet be remembered as figuring among the minor incidents of the war just terminated. By pointing out its proximity to Zehol to the late Emperor, Hien Fung, before he fled to that obscure imperial residence beyond the Great Wall, the less influential, but possibly better disposed, portion of the community at Peking tried to dissuade His Majesty from flight. They used their best arguments to induce the frightened monarch to await among them the progress of events, alleging that in the capital there would be no more risk than at the Tartar palace. Our gun-boats, they declared, could easily find their way from the Eastern Sea up the Lan-hô, to the very walls of the refuge, which they would be sure to knock about his ears with shot and shell.

In the early days of Jesuit pioneering at the Chinese court, Du Halde mentions that Father Gerbillon, in the company of ambassadors and princes, in a journey far to the northward of our present position, crossed and recrossed it, and several times encamped on its banks. It is described as a stream, or very small river, traversing a somewhat poor country, scantily inhabited and as sparely cultivated.

But at Lanchow no such complaint could be preferred against either the river or the adjacent country. Here was in the lower ground

> 'A soft landscape of mild earth,
> Where all was harmony, and calm, and quiet,
> Luxuriant, budding.'

Away some four or five miles to the north, grey hills, extending in serried pinnacles and jags east and west into cloudland, rose, assuming all sorts of phantom forms through the fleecy mists of the far-distant space. Through what looks like a narrow gorge or cleft in the bosom of these giants,— fringed for some way up their sides by noble trees, — issues the sleepy river, flowing in an easy curve towards its by no means tortuous channel southwards. White cottages wander along its course far up the gorge, now nearly

enclosed in a delicious setting of varied green, there heaped on a low mound, the front or gable end becomes conspicuous; the first, with a door in the middle and a window on each side, stare down the cleft as if they were the ocular and olfactory features of a pallid, lurking Cyclops; the latter, with a single black aperture in their pearly surface, like the entrance to a tunnel in a chalk cliff; presently other dwellings glint out in the sunshine from the jasper-and-gold coloured mass, like snowflakes.

Everything in this unexpected Arcadia was a sheet, a clump, or a tuft of emerald and olive green, near the low banks of the water, and in the full bloom of an advanced summer. To our left, between the town and the hills, from the middle of the highly-cultivated level in that direction springs an abrupt and rather stately hillock, on which the eye rested with curious delight, for it was decked and capped by groups of those pretty little temples that form such a distinctive feature in Chinese scenery. They were perched in the most arbitrary manner around a larger structure of the stereotyped religious style of architecture, and embellished by harsh, bristly, gloomy fir trees—favoured emblems of long life to the imaginations of our friends, but symbols of grief and loneliness to ours, and very much out of keeping, too, with such a glad scene.

On our right, to the south of the town, rich sweeps of green millet and maize roll and heave in long lines, without break or interruption, until they impinge against the blue horizon. Then comes a hill more than five hundred feet in height,—the Pagoda hill. The summit is crowned not only by the peculiar building of that name and shape, that stands so near the brink of the steepest face of the precipitous crag as to appear ready to topple over, were it not maintained *in situ* by some invisible power, but also by a neat little house of the dovecot fashion,—probably another temple,—peeping over into the cheerful picture below from between two or

three aged pines standing within a tiny palisade of millet stalks.

On the opposite side of the river, about half a mile from it, and running from the hills parallel to its left bank, descends an abrupt ridge, densely clothed with trees, until it gradually smooths down into the universal level, dotted along its sides and crest with many a flat-roofed cottage, half buried in luxuriant vegetation. Ornamental trees, orchards, and cereals, rested as securely in their undisturbed paradise, as if their owners knew nothing of the internecine feuds that were destroying the nation.

It was impossible to look on such a beautiful picture, now in its fairest and most felicitous colouring, without fervently wishing it might never be changed into a landscape of ruin and sorrow, made up of burning roof-trees, forsaken fields sprinkled with the blood of their tillers, and broken-hearted beggars haunting the devastated spots on hill and in valley!

But a few minutes' ride was required to bring us alongside of the Lan-hô, the muddy waters of which it was necessary to ferry, the width at present being not much less than two hundred yards, but, by the broad sandy beach on the other side, at certain seasons it must be at least two hundred more. There was some little life and motion going on on the right bank, caused by the boat traffic passing up and down, as well as by the presence of the ferry-boats poling and pushing their promiscuous loads about from side to side. A miniature fleet of tiny, long, narrow, canoe-like lighters, without keels, and alike square at stem and stern to admit of their being lashed to each other in strings, are moored to the low alluvial bank, on which their crews are hurriedly preparing the evening meal, or are hard at work transferring to the shore the cargoes of rice, salt, and other native produce brought up by these craft of light draught from the junks which had penetrated from the Gulf up the river, until the shallowness of the water stopped their farther advance.

Various detachments, consisting each of half a dozen or more boats, joined bow to stern, filled with merchandise of some kind or other, were pulled up against the stream — which must have been running down at the rate of a mile and a half an hour — by nude gaunt figures, tanned to the deepest brown by the hot rays of the sun; their brain-pans being alone shielded from its frizzling effects by a blue sort of turban. Their bodies were nearly bent double by the heavy strain put upon them, and their chests were deeply indented by the bamboo which passes diagonally across the breast, and to which is tied the long end of the tracking-cord attached to the slender mast of the leading boat — the only mast in the fleet.

Wearily they plod on, two or three to a line, keeping step, and each pulling his just share of the burden, never talking, and but rarely hiccuping a low monotonous melody; while the dark-faced fellow who crouches down in the stern of the last skiff with a clumsy oar keeps the flotilla clear of the sides and from shoals, as it floats away towards the mountains on its passage perhaps to Zehol, far beyond their impracticable heights.

Some of these dusky slaves came to look at us in the most irreverent and shameless manner, evidently thinking no more of exhibiting themselves before strangers without a garment than we would of appearing before them without gloves.

A large square enclosure of the never-failing millet straw, with a range of bothies at one side of the same material daubed with mud, is nearly filled by teams of quadrupeds eating out of mangers, with their carts, owners, and drivers, all awaiting their turn to cross by the busy ferry.

We were obligingly permitted to avail ourselves of the first boat coming alongside, by those who were ready for embarkation,—so, after the indispensable amount of difficulty and delay consequent on unyoking the skittish mules, wheel-

ing the cart up a narrow wooden inclined plane to the flush deck, jumping the animals on board from the shore, when everything else had been stowed away, the cranky vessel was pushed off, and we were vigorously engaged in soothing or coercing the more alarmed quadrupeds on their departure from the shore.

The depth of the river here was in no part more than eight feet, with in some places a rocky bottom, in others sand or alluvium. Below, and not far from the ferry track, a small dry shoal, covered with rushes and tenanted by various members of the gull family, lay in the middle of the stream, offering an insurmountable obstacle to the passage of anything through the remaining navigable portions, save the light skiffs employed by the natives.

On the opposite side a large convoy of heavy country carts, covered with the mud of many days' travel, was halted for the arrival of boats to convey them across.

They were transporting a number of soldiers towards the west, and were encumbered by a very promiscuous stock of baggage, packed and slung below and above the semicircular neat roof, leaving only room sufficient for one or two passengers to lie on the boards. Muzzles of matchlocks, tufted heads of spears, leathern quivers filled with arrows, and heavy swords, were artfully displayed under cover, to show the warlike mission of their wearers.

While the mules were being disembarked and harnessed again on the shingly beach, several of these eastern warriors collected around us and were intensely curious about all they saw, especially admiring our saddles and bridles, and our boots; even going so far as to apply the sense of touch to the cloth of our coats and trousers—extolling loudly the quality and fashion of our apparel and equipment.

One, who appeared to be the leader, and who certainly exhibited more intelligence and address than any of his fellows, made himself very busy, and had apparently more

purpose in his inquiries; and with him, until the tardy cart was ready, we sought to fraternise.

With much of the dare-devil revealed in his youthful but hard features, and as much swagger and style in his carriage and bearing as a newly-promoted French sous-officier, he was as timid and scared as any schoolboy when we began to talk to him. He was tall and well proportioned, and as erect as if he had been all his days in the hands of a Western drill sergeant; his glossy well-plaited queue was wound jauntily round his head — and with it worn in this way every Chinaman looks well — the end of the heavy black silk cord with which it was incorporated dangling saucily over the right shoulder; his figure was well set off by the loose white jacket partially covering his arms and chest; and a thick blue cotton sash was around his waist, in which were stuck two long wooden-handled dirks, bound together for some mysterious purpose by leathern thongs.

He wore a pair of wide-legged blue cotton trousers, tied round the ankle by a broad white bandage, and ornamented from thence to the knee with a profusion of wreaths and swirls in black velvet, until in front of the knee the character 'Shau'—meaning longevity—terminated the gay embroidery. By this he was distinguished from his brother soldiers, who were but coarsely clad. The nails on his delicate fingers were long enough to serve as marrow-spoons, and his shoes, though dust-stained, were superior to the cobbled-up old sandals of his comrades.

In short, our youthful friend was nothing less, in our eyes, than a *beau sabreur* of a peaceful nation; a dandy swinge-buckler or sworder among unarmed villagers, and a veritable Mars when gallantly endeavouring to storm the hearts of the dark glancing beauties by whose homes he passed.

In return for the close inspection he had made of us, we imagined we were fairly entitled to ask him some little questions, and to request a look at his side-arms, but he quickly

retired beyond our reach, and eyed us for a few minutes rather doubtingly, until, struck with the ridiculous idea of such a valiant-looking person going to fight the battles of his country with 'longevity' on his legs, we laughingly enquired the meaning of such a whimsical device. He skulked away out of sight among the waggons, evidently taken aback at such unwonted liberties.

When we were ready to resume our journey, the groom was told to pay the ferrymen some small sum for their trouble, but the two rascals—great, ill-favoured individuals—would take nothing less than their demand of one thousand cash, and looked in every way ready to make a row of it. Ma-foo fruitlessly exerted his persuasive eloquence; in vain M. threatened to re-cross to Lanchow, there to protest before a mandarin his determination not to pay between four and five shillings for what, at most, cost no more than a few cash to an ordinary traveller.

Things were in a fix, words were running high, a boisterous altercation was imminent — for both sides seemed resolved not to surrender the slightest tithe of their claims— and the evening was approaching—at this crisis the bashful soldier came up, listened for a few moments to the dispute, and then took the elder of the boatmen aside. He plied the fellow with such irresistible reasoning, that presently we were immensely astonished by an announcement that all had been settled! There was nothing to pay, and we had permission to depart.

The would-be extortioners at once betook themselves to their boat, and were soon aiding the tired waggon conductors to get their loads on board. Our amiable friend having accomplished this essential service, modestly maintained a distant position, where he kept posturing gracefully at the bow of the boat, out of reach of our thanks. We made no attempt to alter this arrangement, as we were confident that this was one of those ferries maintained in lieu of a bridge

by the Chinese government for the public service, and for the gratuitous passage of wayfarers across the river. The fellows had tried to extort this large sum, presuming on our ignorance and inability to resist, as we were travelling without the slightest semblance of protection or authority from their officials.

Upon leaving the dry sand and shingle of the now attenuated river's bed, the road ascended the abrupt heights in a rather disagreeable uphill fashion, that tried the strength and endurance of our team, and the tough texture of the gear and traces of twisted thongs. But the summit was gained without any mishap, after a short though active spurt for four or five hundred yards, during which the mules had exhibited such decided symptoms of fatigue, that it was as much a matter of necessity as of humanity to give them a sufficient rest.

It was but doing simple justice to ourselves and the landscape we had quitted, to bestow on it another survey before bidding adieu to one of the prettiest prospects it had been our good fortune to meet in this land, for down in that valley, spread out under that intensely blue sky that was undiscoloured by cloud, lay as serene a picture of beauty and rural tranquillity as the heart of man could desire to find in any quarter of the world.

We halted in a little village surrounded by orchards and great wide-spreading walnut trees, that threw dark masses of foliage over cottage and garden; and near us stood a rude Artesian well, from which the good folks drew deliciously cool and sweet water.

The afternoon was so clear, that the eye could scan for many miles over the country through which we had traversed. Almost at our feet, the Lan-hô meandered gently along the edge of the plain, like a wide streak of black paint, until lost in the corn-land a long way south, and in the gully between those towering peaks in the opposite direction. On its

surface men and boats appeared like so many water-scorpions leisurely swimming about or asleep under the tiny trees overhanging the water.

Thence the plain rolled away in verdant sheets until stopped by the microscopic roofs of houses among the willows and fruit trees; then the fantastic turrets of the Lanchow wall threw up their sharp dark edges over all; beyond to the left, the Pagoda hill uplifted its bluish-grey

View of Lanchow.

structure as boldly as does Ailsa Craig from the Frith of Clyde.

On the other side, a confused array of jags and pinnacles, regular in height as the teeth of a saw, looking as if they would disappear altogether in the golden-and-violet sky, so sharp seemed their points, while in the gathering haziness of the evening, the temple hill—a *Mons Paradisea* fit for the gods—softly reclined at the base of the mountains, as if it

had never been touched by the profane hand of Buddha's followers.

Long did we gaze across the pleasant expanse until the golden light of the sun followed him down behind the dusky-blue chain of rocks, and the rosy hues were quickly flying beneath the irregular horizon, thinning away in intensity as they sank; then we somewhat unwillingly turned our faces towards the lonely stretch of unknown road yet to be got over.

Every variety of British landscape had been stored away in the treasure-house of memory, but none made so pleasant an impression, nor came to our recollections afterwards, clothed in so many charms, as the view just described.

The narrow road wound and twisted over all sorts of outrageous heights and hollows; at one time doubling round the advanced end of a bank, at another over crumbling stony fragments thrust through its face; more frequently burrowing through deep cuttings, where the labour that had been bestowed on them evinced the value put by the people of these parts on opening a means of communication with the river.

Millet, and orchards, and willows were everywhere, prying faces of all ages stared down on us from the edges of the banks above, until, in the grey twilight, the straggling residences of stone or mud began to assume something like order, and formed themselves up in two long lines, between which we rattled over sundry stones, serving as an irregular pavement, and were pleased to be told that our destination for the night had been reached.

We were in the town at the distance we had proposed at starting in the morning, and there was the inn—the 'Shih Mun,' or Rocky Portal, in which we might put up. Neither the disconsolate-looking tenements, standing as if hopelessly vacant, with their dull doors and windows unoccupied, nor the outside of the *auberge*, at the gate of which the muleteer halted, gave tokens of any uncommon degree of comfort or

amity. To say the least of it, the locality bore a very suspicious aspect, notwithstanding the combined protestations of Ma-foo and the carter to the contrary, and their bold and loud testimonies as to the excellences of the 'Tien.' I was at all times a little inclined to suspect the conduct and feelings of the natives, among whom chance ordained that I should trust myself during the watches of the night—not that I was afraid of them, or of any damage they might have inflicted, but I habitually kept a sharp look-out, so as not to be thrown off my guard. My misgivings were increased when, on making the customary survey before turning in, I discerned, a few dozen paces from the house, nailed high up against the grey corticose trunk of an old willow, one of those horrid wooden golgothas, through the spars of which might be seen the revolting, corroded, black 'caput mortuum' of some unfortunate wretch, who, by committing murder or robbery, had incurred the popular penalty of beheading.

Small time, however, was there for consideration. The cart and its attendants had passed the portal, and it was incumbent on us to follow suit. Our ponies needed no incentive, but rushed eagerly into the quadrangle, where our unpleasant feelings ceased. We found ourselves in one of the snuggest little places we had yet seen in China, which indicated a nearer approach to civilisation than any of the hovels designated 'inns' occupied by us since our departure from Tien-tsin. The servants, far from manifesting those signs of fear or curiosity that had rendered their office a sinecure, came forward with alacrity. With as much obsequiousness as distinguishes the Johns and Thomases of Western lands, they took our ponies by the bridles while we dismounted, as if they had been all their lives accustomed to foreigners, and assisted the carter in unharnessing his fatigued pair of mules as if he had been an old acquaintance.

The landlord, a fine, stately, strapping, middle-aged man,

with as well-formed and good-humoured a set of features as host could wish to be furnished with—and a jolly countenance should be a speciality in a Boniface—came towards us streaking his thin moustache and giving one or two jerks of his head to adjust the luxurious plaited appendage between his shoulders, bestowing on us our guest rite in a very graceful genuflexion; his open face betraying not the slightest vestige of surprise, but rather pleasure at the rencontre, as if it said—

> 'Sirs, you are very welcome to our house:
> It must appear in other ways than words,
> Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.'

In a word, the greeting was of so warm a nature, that on the spot we found, as it were, a home; and we were domiciled for the next eight or nine hours of the twenty-four as securely and satisfactorily under the roof and auspices of this sober-complexioned worthy as if some twenty thousand miles, more or less, did not intervene between us and the most commendable family hotel within the precincts of the world's metropolis. There we remained, inhaling the pure invigorating mountain air, and delighting in as pleasant a hostelry, consistent with Chinese taste and ideas of accommodation, as anyone, under the circumstances, could desire.

At what must have been a very respectable elevation above the sea level, the temperature felt agreeably cool and even bracing. There needed no better proof of the sanitary condition of the place than the evidence of our own senses, when we had the opportunity of examining the healthy bloom on the cheeks of a crowd of robust individuals, who began to straggle into the enclosure as soon as they heard of our arrival.

It was just the sort of place medical men would select as a sanatorium for people worn out by the sultry, relaxing heat of the plain; and it would have done credit to their choice.

On two sides of the spacious yard, built up against the high stone walls, were numerous sheds and troughs for the ponies; in front, facing the street, and communicating with the yard and that thoroughfare by two wide doors, were the servants' hall, the kitchen, the public *salle-à-manger*, the dormitory for the reception of the humbler and less ostentatious class of wayfarers, and the general rendezvous for everybody,—saving and except the more aristocratic visitors,—all in one.

From this sallied forth, when required, the host, the cook, the accountant, the scullion, the man-of-all-work,— we never in the whole course of the journey saw a female in one of these higgledy-piggledy abodes,—and the eager crowd, after they had discussed the best mode of paying us a visit; and into it our two followers were only too ready to dive whenever our backs were turned, coming out again highly impregnated with the heavy alcoholic effluvium of Samshu, which acquisition led us to believe that the inn added dram-shop to its other functions.

It was a low, murky, single-storied den, redolent of the powerful fumes of all sorts of volatile ingredients; therefore, keeping it at a respectful distance, we faced about. Beyond it, there was a temporary roof of fir-branches, raised on poles in the middle of the yard, with tables and chairs underneath for the use of those who preferred a shady retreat in the open air at midday to the sudorific indoors, and where the *bona-fide* travellers took up their quarters.

A regular series of one-storied stone-and-brick buildings stood at the bottom of a grassy knoll, on which the never-absent willow and pine-tree waved thickly and darkly against the sides of the precipitous mountains that rose immediately in their rear: their spinous ridges, now ominously wrapped in dense white clouds, indicated anything but fine weather.

Under the leadership of our long white-robed cicerone, we were conducted to these neat little refuges, and indulged in

a peep at our apartment. The inspection was in every way calculated to please; no difficulty was experienced in reconciling ourselves to such good luck, or in laying ourselves out for a night of supine enjoyment, as a sort of sequel to so many days' saddle work.

But, while preparations are being made for dinner, after we have imbibed the habitual quantity of pure cold water and a small basin of hot tea, according to Ma-foo's prescription, let us take a look at the outside, and then at the inside, of this model habitation.

Walking in the courtyard, we discover that our civil landlord is a family man, and that his private quarters stand behind the other buildings, quite out of the way of ordinary traffic. We cast our eyes that way; but not a creature is moving. The windows are completely hid by a low wall thrown up before them, which is whitewashed and covered with black characters, expressing, or asking for, all sorts of good things. Finding nothing in this direction, we betake ourselves again to an examination of the skill and taste expended on the ground in front of our apartments, and find occupation enough.

From one end of the range to the other, which is raised three or four steps above the level of the court, a wide space is partitioned off by an ingeniously plaited fence of millet stalk, and cut out in miniature terraces for the reception of plants in pots,—chiefly three varieties of hollyhock, the China aster, and some kinds of roses in full flower, that threw out a sweet perfume to the dewy night,—with an abundance of creepers clinging to the fence and festooning the front of the house,—crimson amaranths lending their gay colours to blend with the hues of the evergreen shrubs interspersed among them.

At each side of the doorway, resting on rugged pillars of rockwork, are immense glazed vases filled with water, on the surface of which float fine specimens of the almost idolised

water lily—just on the point of blooming, with black and red gold fish swimming around the stems, and sporting under the great palmate leaves—curious-looking animals, with an extraordinary developement of the caudal fin, and eyes protruding far beyond their heads. In one corner are some dwarf fruit trees, the most notable of which is the species of citron called the 'fingers of Buddha'—from the digitated manner in which the fruit grows—the plum-tree, and the peach, the double blossoms of which, in the early spring months, form such a beautiful spectacle in northern gardens.

These signs of attention to embellishment and neatness gave quite a charm to the whole of the place, and tended more to please one with the establishment, than if it had been a great deal more pretending. The rooms, too, were fair models of the North China dwellings, and showed the same regard for the just disposition of the minor details. The entire building had been erected in the undeviating style of architecture of the country, embracing nothing either of grandeur or splendour, and scarcely boasting anything more than a series of roofs supported by plain walls, such as would mark the earliest attempts of a people relinquishing the tents of a nomadic life. From the palace to the temple, and from the temple through all the different classes of tenement down to the lowest hovel of mud, the same primitive elements prevail, and are retained in what must be nearly all their early simplicity; the only attempts at ornamentation being chiefly lavished on the roofs. In the south of China, and more especially in the larger cities—not excepting the more northern city of Shanghai—very many of the houses are two-storied, and furnished with a small wooden staircase inside; in the north not a dwelling could we see of more than one story, save the larger temples at Peking and Tien-tsin, where a row of musty rooms were sometimes piled on the lower tier.

The ground floor seems to be all that is necessary or

desirable, in a land where cultivation demands so much space for the maintenance of the inhabitants, though for what reason it would be hard to discover, unless it be true that no structures are permitted to be raised higher than the temples, or that the female portion of the community, in consequence of their distorted feet, are considered unable to ascend or descend stairs; so that a wasteful extent of ground is covered by low buildings, and occupied by extravagantly proportioned courtyards, without any commensurate advantage.

There is a sense of littleness in the general conception, of triviality and toyishness in all the details, that is immediately impressed upon the stranger, somehow or other, at first unfavourably. In time, however, he perceives a happy mixture of simplicity, and even elegance, in the light and airy mansions, sufficient to demand some amount of admiration.

The general absence of stone blocks in buildings of any height, the substitution for these of brick in thin weak walls, and a predominance of timber in the composition of all dwellings and public edifices, tend to early decay—a result very much accelerated by the heavy overdone roofs; so that, like many things one sees, reads, and hears about in China, the national architecture presents a tottering, dilapidated appearance everywhere, even within the sacred precincts of the Imperial residence at Peking.

It seems strange, that though the Chinese have an abundance of excellent granite and other stone, perhaps more easily wrought, in the lofty but accessible ranges of hills bordering the greater portion of the rich alluvial plain in which their principal cities and towns are situated, with rivers, streams, and canals on which to transport them, yet, except for some unimportant purpose, such as paving streets with slabs here and there, forming foundations for city walls, building bridges, or steps for doorways, they do not avail themselves of the advantage. They prefer the employment of brick and wood chiefly, if not altogether, in the erection of

public and private edifices, contrasting in this respect with the ancient Egyptians, who quarried and conveyed to great distances the indestructible granite rock wherewith to build and adorn those wondrous structures, those enduring remains of departed magnificence, which remain marvels to the traveller who rides among them for hundreds of miles in the valley of the Nile.

Despising or fearing all without her wide boundaries—a comparatively refined nation when other countries were almost totally uncivilised, rendered independent by her immense wealth and wide range of climates, as well as by the industry of her peaceful subjects, of the kingdoms around—China has exercised but little influence in modifying or directing the progress of either the antique or modern world.

Nevertheless, by maintaining an isolated self-reliant position, and inhibiting all intercourse with other peoples—building, inventing, labouring, and regulating after her own fashion, more for the present than the future—she has, according to Chinese notions, done all that was required to constitute her a great empire; while the Egyptians and Assyrians have been swept away, leaving nothing but their indelible traditions and fancies figured on the desolate fragments of grand temples and cities; and Greek and Roman have faded away, endowing, however, the art of our day with unrivalled models. With convenient materials well adapted for carving in plenty, with the use of which for other purposes Chinamen seem to be well acquainted, it is astonishing that they did not avail themselves of their aid to perpetuate the memories of their divinities, emperors, heroes, or scholars—the more especially as all their oldest mythological allegories represent Pwanku, the first man, chiselling the heavens out of chaos, and images were introduced at no very remote date for purposes of worship, nearly all of which are formed from wood or mud.

They have a cupola-shaped monument in the Lama temple, at the northern suburb of Peking,—a curious erection, of white marble, covered with elaborately-cut historical or allegorical subjects in *basso* and *alto-relievo*. It was built to commemorate the death of Pan-Shen Lama, who, in the forty-fourth year of Kieng-lung, came to Peking, and 'went to rest' in the temple, from whence His Majesty sent him back to Thibet in a golden pagoda or mausoleum. Some graveyards also contain a few laboriously-wrought, but unique specimens of carving, all of modern production, and in all probability the result of Jesuit instruction; but there is scarcely any proof that sculpture, as an art, has been recognised in the empire.

I discovered some old figures in the fields near Tien-tsin, half buried in the soil, disfigured, and otherwise neglected, of men — priests and warriors they appeared to be — and women, wearing strange costumes, with horses ready saddled, and cattle, sheep, and dogs, all of life size, and hewn out of the common, greyish-blue, compact limestone, found in the neighbouring hills.

Without the Shanghai city walls, in a little garden, I met with fac-similes of these, but generally defaced and without dates, though they are sometimes asserted to belong to the early days of the Ming dynasty, — no farther back than six centuries, — and are supposed to be fragments of the tombs of high personages, each group doing duty as attendants to serve in Hades.

Too much engaged in their easy work-a-day world, unmindful of the future, and ever looking back towards their ancient customs and institutions, instead of forward to a higher state of civilisation, all their actions biassed by their rigidly economical and calculating minds, the men of the Middle Kingdom are not likely to sacrifice time and labour in what does not possess the recommendation of present utility.

One might have concluded that a difference of climate,

from a pretty equable southern temperature to one of wide and severe extremes, would have caused the Northern Chinese to modify their tastes in regard to the construction of their dwellings, and meet the requirements of the seasons by suitable arrangements within doors; but no—each house is made as open, airy, and summer-like, and yet as confined, as if the tropical heat never disappeared, and its inmates were condemned to an unvarying round of hot days and years.

No provision is made for the bitter winter,—when an intensely chilly gale from the Gulf drives the blood into the innermost recesses of the body, leaving every exposed surface liable to frost-bite,—except the oven couch that adorns every apartment, and which I thought such a singular contrivance the first time I saw it in a rude hovel at Talien-whan Bay.

The walls are—underneath those climbing plants—built of the blue bricks in universal use, north and south, and which are here, like the men who employ them, larger and of more substance than those seen at Shanghai or more southerly; and in very workmanlike style are laid in even courses, with no stone foundation, as such a substantial substructure is rare. But in every house in and around Tientsin, and along the whole route, when formed of bricks, there is a peculiarity I have never observed elsewhere. About two or three feet from the ground, separating one tier of bricks from that above, is a layer of coarse straw, laid transversely and closely, and trimly cut off to a level with the wall, in the face of which it looks rather odd.

To our enquiries as to the beneficial effects expected from this infirm introduction, the only reasonable reply has been that it prevents the *soo-chee*, or 'Spring-damp,' from rising and diffusing itself within the building, where it would remain until the winter, when, becoming frozen, it would expand and throw asunder the bricks, and be very likely to cause the downfall of the whole fabric. Whether this be true or not,

without more experience it would be rash for me to say; but certain it is, that, either owing to this precaution, or to the dry state of the atmosphere throughout the year, damp and its results are never discernible in the exteriors or interiors of the houses so prepared.

The Chinese have so long dwelt in raised dwellings of this description, and their powers of observation are so keen in such matters, that a knowledge of their habits predisposes one to believe their explanation, and give them credit for their acuteness.

All the first and middle-class houses I have seen were enclosed within high walls of brick or mud, and the veriest plebeian, the poorest rag or paper-gatherer, or the almost outcast proprietor of a den under a city wall, contrives to appropriate a scrap of ground,—a sort of neutral territory, hemmed in from public intrusion,—after the manner of their superiors. These better houses are often situated in the strangest out-of-the-way nooks and narrow lanes; and, when they chance to be in a trading thoroughfare, the appearance of the gloomy wall gives no token of what may be within, though it imparts a miserable character to what might otherwise be a cheerful street; so that when the European traveller ascends the few low steps that lie before the narrow doorway of a tolerably well-to-do Chinaman's private abode, and, bent on paying a 'chin-chinning,' or domiciliary visit to the good man, passes between two conical stone guardians, something like rabid dogs, with fierce, open mouths, protruded tongues, and *dumb-bells* round their necks, he is surprised to find a spacious courtyard, paved with bricks or tiles, leading perhaps to several others, and summer-house-like, self-contained buildings for every purpose of domestic life, methodically, though sometimes intricately, arranged.

A wall is now and then found in the yard facing the outer door, on one side of which is a little niche with the joss shrine—a smoky little idol with a pot before it, in which the

propitiary incense-sticks are to be burnt*—and on the other, flowery inscriptions in puzzling characters of great size, which, translated into our plain language, signify the most ardent invocations to their gods, or desires for the usual good fortune of a Chinese; profuse sentiments, such as 'May the beautiful stars of heaven shine continually on this door,' or 'May the moon with its heavenly light shed eternal beams of felicity on this house,' &c.

The chief point of attraction for displaying their peculiar tastes, as I before remarked, seems to be on the roof, which is heavily overdone with all kinds of ridges and furrows, curved and straight lines, and layers of ponderous blue tiles arranged in a grotesque fashion—the large semi-cylindrical ones at the corners being deeply indented with the character that indicates or expresses 'longevity'—perhaps the most popular in the language, figuring as it does not only on the ends of the tiles, but in some conspicuous place on almost every article—on their coffins, their chairs, caps, and shoes, on articles of ornament as well as those of utility, in the ceremonies at birth, marriage, and burial. It was not thought out of place on the nimble legs of our soldier-friend at the Lan-hô ferry, and, indeed, in some form or another—for it is written in about fifty different ways, and nearly every one at all educated can read the whole of them—it meets the eye everywhere.

The main courtyard of large houses, has a very lofty structure of poles and laths covered by matting—this our intelligent landlord has copied in his own rustic way in that cool shed before us—during the hot summer months; and these tall fabrics form very striking and prominent features in towns, where all the buildings are about the same height.

* Just as the Greeks had an altar to Apollo, their tutelary divinity, the sacred laurel tree, or a head of Hermes or Mercury, in the same situation.

But the quarters for domestics, and especially for the porter, near the street-entrance are left to broil in the sun, while it is only the more dignified and select portions of the habitation remotest from the front—those kept secluded from the ken of the world—that participate in the deep shelter thus afforded.

CHAPTER XII.

SUPERSTITIOUS FANCIES — THE HORSE-SHOE — WORDS OF GOOD OMEN — CHINESE LARES AND PENATES — HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE — USE OF THE KANG — HOT AIR — THE DOMESTIC HEARTH — PREFERENCE FOR AN ENGLISH FIRESIDE — A CHINESE ARMOURY — USE OF THE BOW — MUSCULAR DEVELOPEMENT — THROWING THE STONE — A PLEASANT REFECTION — CHINESE RESPECT FOR AGE — A NIGHT STORM — OUR ARMS.

ABSURD superstitious practices, and the effects of idle fancies, nurtured and strengthened by a false religion—a religion nothing better than a tissue of incongruous fables and puerile delusions—run riot everywhere in the public gaze; and sorcerers, necromancers, and soothsayers are ever in request to help those ignorant people who, haunted by bad fortune, malignant spirits, or unpropitious influences, are ready to come down handsomely to induce the sorcerer to ward off real or prospective disasters, by incantations, philters, or timely notice of the impending calamity.*

This state of mind is more noticeable in large cities, such as Tien-tsin, than in the country, and though it jars very much on one's feelings, and excites a sincere pity, it cannot be forgotten that the most refined nations of antiquity shared similar delusions, and that even in our own land—not many generations ago—they flourished as luxuriantly.*

Looking at the two half-doors near which I am standing, I see what corresponds to a superstitious safeguard yet to

* It is impossible to forget that by order of a papal bull, the Inquisition hunted out and destroyed 100,000 victims for witchcraft in Germany; that 30,000 people suffered execution for the same in England; and about the year 1515, 500 witches were burnt in three months at Geneva.

be found on barn-doors and stables in England—the lucky horse-shoe. This is sometimes transferred to floating habitations, such as fishing-boats, and even, if I remember right, to more formidable craft—and had not the immortal Nelson a rusty symbol of this description nailed to the main or mizen-mast of his invulnerable flag-ship? In Gay's humorous fable of the old woman and her cats, he makes her complain that

> 'Straws laid across my path retard,
> The horse-shoe nail'd, each threshold's guard.'

And so might the witches, warlocks, and foul spirits in North China grumble at similar agencies for their discomfiture; for in addition to the remarkable way in which the builders have endeavoured to avoid placing doorways so as to face each other, believing that it prevents the ready exit or entrance of the *mauvais gens* from place to place—two deities, one pasted against each half of the door, keep watch and ward over the portal intrusted to their supervision.

Chinese history declares that a spell or charm, consisting of the words 'Mun-tee' or 'Tau-foo,' specially devised for the subjugation or banishment of such baneful incorporeal beings, was introduced for the protection of the liege subjects who might be troubled by such visitants, and that it consisted of the four words Shin-tu and Yuh-li, which are the names of these gods. There they are, more ferocious and terror-inspiring than any of the bugbears of the nursery, in menacing postures, flourishing clubs and swinging great swords. One is a white King of Hearts' face, the other a thorough grim-griffin-hoof—a sort of salamander, with a Gorgon expression of countenance, and a complexion of a strong brick-red, from out of which large black and white crab-eyes are jumping in quite a demoniacal fashion, sufficiently horrible to send any number of children into convulsions of fright.

Sometimes, and more particularly in Tien-tsin, the silly notions of the people show themselves in a slightly different form. These are less easily noticed by the careless observer in the thronged and narrow streets, but are novel, if not interesting, when discovered. If a house abuts upon or stands before the end of a lane or passage, the side looking towards that passage almost invariably has a small tile or slab of stone let into it, with an inscription which varies with the fancy of the owner, the opinion of the fortune-telling sage, or the locality from whence the tablet may have been procured.

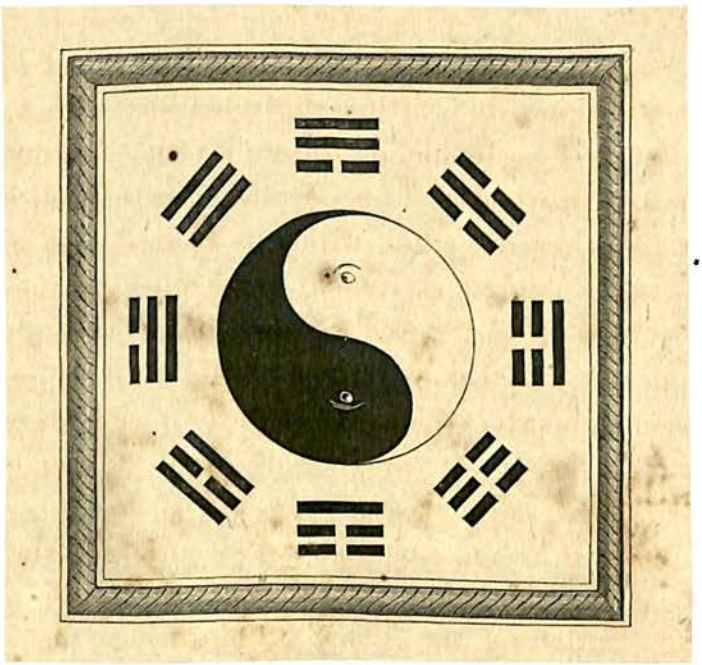
An inscription of this kind on a large slab of blue slate, neatly cut and painted, as if it demanded care and attention, I saw in the wing of a brick building at the foot of a by-lane, not far from the banks of the Peiho; and, curious to know its meaning, I obtained a translation of it. It was simply to the effect that 'This stone was brought from the province of Shantung, and placed here to prevent the evil influences of the lane coming near this house.'

This inscription is likely to excite a lively degree of interest in the scholar, from its similarity to those of a like nature preserved among the remains of Roman signs and pavements brought to light in England and elsewhere, where invocations to the *genius loci* for good fortune, frequently concluded with a desire to be spared from misfortune and malign influences. For example, on the shattered surface of a tessclated pavement found in the ruins of what had been a Roman private house at Salzburg, in Germany, an almost effaced writing has become apparent, but in a fragmentary condition, signifying —

> '. . . . (Name of the person is lost) Hic habitat :
> Nihil intret mali !' *

* '(——) dwells here—may nothing evil enter!' *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, by T. Wright, Esq., London.

At other times, instead of the written character, I have observed the *Yang yin pah kwa* — a species of religious 'mystic cabala,' made up of combinations of the monad and duad



principles of Chinese philosophy, with eight tables arranged in circles around the tadpole-like symbol, which is illustrative of the reciprocal state of everything in the Celestial's material world.

But I have remained long enough outside; it is almost dark, and the atmosphere feels rather damp, in consequence of the descent of the heavy clouds within a very short distance of the house; so I will go in for the night.

The door opens on an apartment which we may suppose is the hall or ante-room, and from which an inner room branches off to the right and left. The floors, both of inner and outer rooms, are of square tiles, and look cool enough for summer, but very shivery for winter. The walls are covered with a white satin or silvery paper, and are adorned with scrolls and labels. On a table in the centre stands, wonderful to behold, a very common glass globe — the most important curiosity in the house — set off as it is on a very

presuming stand of walnut wood, and placed in the situation where it can be most advantageously seen by the patronisers of the inn, when they seek the hospitality of the 'Shih Mun.'

I can scarcely do less than salute the *Lares* and *Penates*, who are worshipped in a little red-painted box, with a row of gilt attributes on each side, on the wall, facing the door.

There are two household gods sitting, in the dull light of two vermilion-coated candles, with legs crossed, and one hand admonishingly uplifted, as if giving a lecture on the nature and properties of the varied assortment of vegetable and animal messes laid before them in little cups, or rebuking their Pagan supporters for some neglect of religious rite or ordinance. The strong camphorous smell of the burning incense-sticks pervades every corner.

The landlord is anxious that we should take the right-hand room, but we prefer the left, because it affords us a chance of ventilating the place by throwing the window open — an operation that could not have been performed for many years before. The people wonder at our exhibiting such a liking for fresh air, but are not displeased, as it gives the outside folks an opportunity of observing our doings within, for the windows all look into the courtyard, and that is pretty well crowded by a very orderly congregation of villagers, who look and smoke, but are sparing of noise or talk. The frames, though stoutly made, stand great risk of being smashed in the efforts made to throw them outwards; and the paper panes do not escape unscathed; but this does not much matter; they are easily repaired. It is only in some of the better class houses, near Tien-tsin, that one or two panes of glass to a window are to be seen — that luxury never extending itself to the common dwellings, where the use of thin white paper — sometimes oiled to increase its translucency — calico, or occasionally ground oyster-shells, makes everything without undistinguishable, while throwing

an opaqueness over the interior of the houses not at all pleasant. Skylights, which would tend so much to lighten up these single-storied rooms, was glass procurable, are unknown; but the calico and paper would be useless in excluding rain or snow in bad weather.

The furniture of the Chinese household is heavy, clumsy, and inelegant, according to our ideas of cabinet-work, though not devoid of skill and workmanship in its construction. It comprises but few articles besides tables, chairs, and low stools, with ponderous cupboards and screens. Many introduce large arm-chairs, which are as uncomfortable as they are unwieldy.

As I before remarked, the houses are not adapted for winter use. A trial quickly showed that they were very deficient in comfort and cheerfulness, particularly by the absence of fire-places or grates, for which, in the eyes of a Briton, there can be no compensation. The inmates have done their best, and done very well too, in devising means whereby they might be able to palliate the cold by the antagonistic properties of heat, and without all that dust, smoke, cinders, and suffocation that in nearly every case attended the process of combustion as extemporised in the Tien-tsin quarters at the insetting of the cold weather, according to scientific rule, by amateurs in the arts of warming and ventilation.

Besides the little braziers and stoves, more inconvenient and productive of headaches than the fire-place, that are in general use during the cold months, every dwelling-house as far as I have travelled has one or two rooms, which, in the majority of instances, are engaged for sleeping as well as sitting apartments, when warmth becomes necessary; these contain a hollow couch, *kang*, or bed-place, built of brick, extending along the whole of one side of the apartment. It is five or six feet wide, and raised about two feet from the ground. This is a very near approach to the Roman hypo-

caust, though it does not bear the same tokens of skill and refinement that can be traced in recently disinterred villas.

Outside the apartment, and below the level of the floor, is a small cavity where the fire is kindled and attended to by the domestics, who do not require to enter the house for this purpose. From this little pit flues spring upwards, and proceed in a divergent manner under the stove-bed until they gain the farther extremity, when they converge to meet in the chimney, which rises through the gable-end of the house and carries off the smoke. In summer or winter it is never slept on, unless prudently covered by thick felt and rush matting: the people say it is productive of bad effects if used without these adjuncts, and they cite a maxim of theirs—sure to be derived from that invaluable monitor, experience—to the effect, 'that it is safer and always more preferable to lie on a cold bed,' that is on an ordinary wooden bed, 'than on a cold furnace,' meaning the unheated bare bench. These coverings modify and retain for a long time the transmitted heat when the apparatus is in play; and if a Chinese servant manages the fire below, and does not allow it to burn too fiercely until the mass has reached the proper temperature, the bed made on it is not at all to be cavilled at, but is really very cosy and soporific, when the mercury of the thermometer in the open air has fallen below zero.

As far as fuel is concerned, the thing is economical in the extreme—a great object where this very essential ingredient of winter comfort is so scarce and dear—because the strong current of air set in motion by the flame accelerates the burning of the wood or millet-stems in the fire-pit—the native coal is too hard and stony for such a purpose—and the blaze is carried for a considerable distance through the brick-partitioned flues; consequently it often happens that the end of the fabric most remote from the fuel is sooner warm than the other portions. A moderate fire burning for two hours before going to bed will impart heat enough to

make the structure agreeable until the morning. When kept going in the day-time, if the doors are closed and the seams protected by the thick quilted mats, for whose suspension we see those metal hooks stuck in the lintel of our present bedchamber door, life is supportable.

On such elevations the northern Chinese appear to spend the greater part of their indoor time during winter, and all the members of the family huddle on them instead of the floor when occupied in play, sewing, or reading; indeed, it is the only endurable part of the establishment during rigorous weather, as the cold-blooded folks seldom think of putting carpets or matting on the chilly flags composing the floor, and every other nook and cranny is as open as a cow-shed.

The arrangement, however, has serious drawbacks. Mud and earth enters so largely into the composition of the stove inside and out, that when really hot, the room becomes filled with a sickly effluvium as if from the mould of a newly dug grave; and the air feels so warm and dry, that nobody but a Chinaman can keep his health in it. There are also the risks of a conflagration and a scorching to the sleeper, for at Tien-tsin European servants did not prove very trustworthy observers sometimes of the regulated amount of fire required to produce an equable and moderate temperature in the oven. Woe betide the luckless wight who yielded to its premature but fascinating seductions, and consigned his senses to oblivion with the fierce flame whisking and roaring underneath!

Early trials, for alas! we speak feelingly—sufficed to convince some hapless experimentalists that such outlandish contrivances were not for them, nor for their comfort. The eyelids could not be allowed to drop a few minutes, from apprehensions of an accidental and complete cremation without the slightest warning; or they would be startled out of their nap by the sensation of intense local heat acting on their bodies, when they would find their rugs and blankets reduced to soot.

It was plain enough that terrible disasters might occur, unless very particular care was taken by the domestics. The latter were never happy unless their masters were exceedingly cosy, and could not believe that they could be made too warm on a howling cold night; consequently it did sometimes happen that the poor 'governor' got roasted as expeditiously as a joint in a London kitchen.

It was like tempting fate by sleeping in a charged mine, or on the edge of the crater of an active volcano; there was the furnace outside, and nothing in the world to hinder any mischievously-disposed person from seizing the opportunity to perpetrate a practical joke. These grave defects prejudiced me so strongly against the *kang*, that it was either pulled down or disused before many days of the winter had been got over, and notwithstanding all cavils, I resolved upon having the cheerful twinkling of a visible fire. The change proved as pleasant as it was reasonable, and much comforted me during my isolated situation for many months without letter or newspaper, by suggesting recollections of the happy scenes witnessed in my distant home at this time of the year.

Economists may preach and lecture about the thrift of other countries, and laud their ingenious stoves and furnaces made to evolve the maximum of caloric with the minimum of fuel, as if heat was the only desideratum in a room where people were obliged to spend the greater portion of the day and night; and they may complain loudly of the recklessness with which coal is consumed at home; but, after two or three winters of a comfortable British fireside, let them try these pet inventions in strange lands, and if they do not return with vastly augmented fondness to the open grate, they are not to be classed among those who would see happy homes and smiling faces throughout the three kingdoms. Has not the author of 'Pelham' made the accomplished Vincent ask, 'How can the private virtues be cultivated without a coal fire? Is not domestic affection a synonymous

term with *domestic hearth*? and where do you find either except in honest old England?'.

Let the Northern nations—the semi-dormant Russian, the lethargic Swede, and the slow Dane or Finlander — creep around their stoves, and wonder how we can, with such a waste of fuel, keep ourselves so miserably uncomfortable; and let the frozen-in Chinese loll and smoke in their baking reclination without a thought as to the world beyond their own doors; but give me the 'blithe sunny blink o' *our* ain fireside,' with its pictures of felicity such as never can be found anywhere else.

Never mind if our faces are roasted and our backs frozen — we can stand all that, and are sure, at the same time, that fresh air is about us. We would rather endure these trifling discomforts than be enveloped, day after day, and night after night, in stagnant, relaxing, and stewing hot air.

Our coal — dealt out to us by Providence with such an unsparing hand —and our open coal fires, are as much ours as the great political privileges and the strong sense of happiness we possess.

> 'Blest be the spot where cheerful guests retire
> To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire.'

And steaming stove or fervid *kang* could never reconcile such groups to the loss of the blessings they know so well how to appreciate.

The Chinese labourer no doubt works well and patiently in the fields, or in the crowded marts; and betrays no symptom of discontent, or of longing for anything better; yet his endeavours are not sustained by the prospect that cheers the heart of the English cottager—

> 'His wee-bit ingle blinkin bonnilie,
> His clean hearthstane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
> The lisping infant prattling on his knee.'

Wherever we are, and in whatever humour we may be, we like to indulge in whatever reminds us of home:

> 'Around our evening fire an evening group to draw.'

This seems the very essence of enjoyment, and then, the genial flame tends to heighten the merriment of the joke, and deepen the interest of the tale. And for the contemplative man's recreation under difficulties, could we desire any place better adapted than the silent room, the shaded lamp, and the glowing fire?

Coleridge paints beautifully the effects of the midnight flicker on the solitary thinker, when he tells us that, alone, in pensive disposition

> 'The thin blue flame
> Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not,
> Only that film which fluttered in the grate,
> Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
> Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
> Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
> Making it a companionable form,
> Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit
> By its own moods interprets, everywhere
> Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
> And makes a toy of thought.'

No; we cannot afford to dispense with our grand expositor of social science — our universal panacea against nostalgia. The reflection of the firelight sparkling from eye to eye, and the sense of comfort it distributes, is heightened by the chant of the kettle on the hob, or the almost as musical breathings of the domestic pet that occupies the rug. Perhaps such blessings are in store for our Celestial friends, when they become satisfied as to the superiority and the good intentions of the honourable nations they have hitherto classed as outside barbarians; and then they may be willing to receive suggestions from our engineers and travellers, and bring into use those great coal-fields that underlie the enormous empire. Their miners, instead of burrowing for a few crumbs of coal down in their badly-constructed pits, shall be taught to pierce through the incombustible shale for the valuable mineral.

The stuff they now procure as coal is economised to the best advantage, and made to yield every atom of its slender

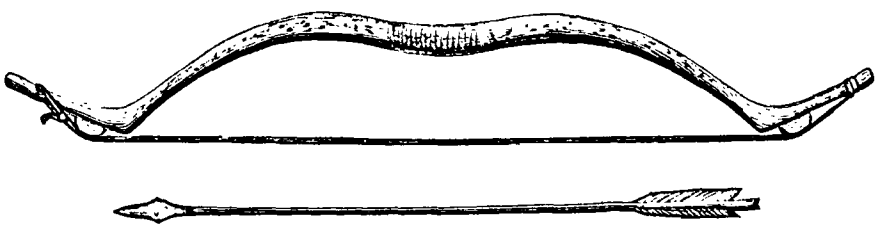
heat-giving proportions in a way that seems to show the high degree of attention paid to its utilisation; and yet it is deemed difficult to ignite, and still more so to keep burning in their stoves or open braziers. When prepared as a fuel, it is minutely pulverised by hammers and mallets, saturated with water, then mixed up thoroughly with clay or mud in a definite quantity, and kneaded into brick or ball-shaped pieces. These, when kindled by a thin layer of charcoal, become of a dull-red colour, burn slowly, give a mild degree of heat—with heavy sulphurous fumes, too—and entirely consume the carbonaceous elements of the coal; thus obviating the unpleasantness and loss that would be incurred by the escape of smoke.

Very many of the more opulent class of houses which we visited at Tien-tsin and Peking had their outhouses stored with these fire-bricks and balls, just as a Westerner would have his coal-cellars ready for the winter's consumption. But in the country, wood and millet-stalks and roots are cut, and gleaned, and hoarded up with the utmost frugality, even within a few miles of almost endless strata of undisturbed coal. At the end of our present quarters is a stack quite sufficient to indicate, by the assemblage of all sorts of incendiary odds and ends from the field, the plantation, and the house, and the manner in which they are preserved — the necessity our host sees for a well-heated fireplace for his own people and the half-frozen guests who visit him in cold weather.

The room we have chosen possesses other attractions besides those of the ordinary commonplace scrolls and pictures, in the form of a well-assorted collection of bows standing in a frame in the corner behind the door; and peculiar holster-pipe shaped leathern quivers filled with long beautifully feathered arrows, nearly all of which are tipped with a square iron spike three or four inches in length. We examined the bows, and found them of various sizes and of as various degrees of strength, but all unstrung.

The landlord, who may at first have doubted the judiciousness of letting us sleep in his armoury, now appeared delighted with our attention, pulled off his long dress, and drawing out one of the bows, the resiliency or strength of which, he told us, was equal to forty catties of one and a half pounds each — with his great wide chest and long muscular arms — began to string it. After our awkward attempts, with him this was but the work of a second, for throwing it behind the right thigh and in front of the left, and catching the right end, he slightly stooped, and with a sudden jerk the bend was reversed, and the loop of the thick string slipped into its notch.

The next bow — equal to sixty or seventy catties — he as quickly bent in the same way, though it was a pretty hard task not only to ourselves, but to the iron-armed Chinese

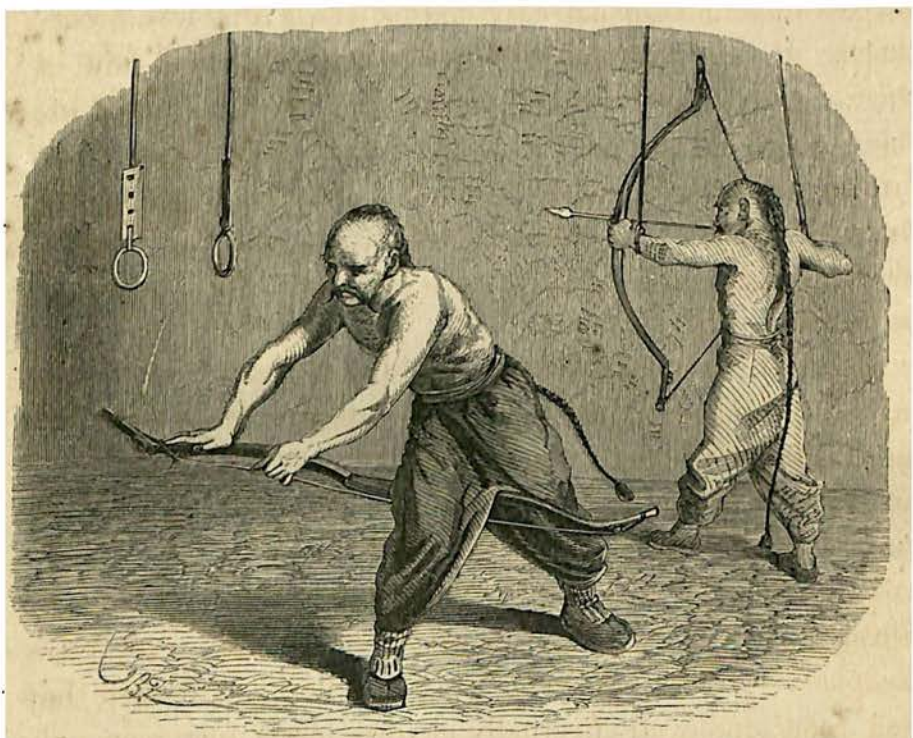


Tartar Bow and Arrow.

Alcon, who was not backward in applauding or expressing surprise when we came near him in strength, and succeeded in making the obdurate weapon crack and bend until it described a full semicircle. Our friend's manner of handling it displayed as much ease as could be attained by constant practice; and no doubt he was an enthusiastic amateur in the science of arms.

We had noticed on entering the room, that from one of the varnished cross-beams of the roof, two articles, like the handles of those elastic chest-expanders used at home, were suspended by cords with small pieces of perforated wood at each end, into the holes of which the two handles were fastened by means of two straps. We could not divine the use of such an unusual piece of mechanism dangling about the height of a man's elbows in the middle of the apartment,

unless it were for the developement of the chest or some other gymnastic exercise; so after the arrows had been handled and the bows had been strung, bent, and again unbent, we asked our instructor to satisfy us as to the *modus operandi* of the strange implements. We ascertained that



Stringing the Bow.

they were rests for practising the use of the bow — but not as we use rests for the rifle, by laying the weapons on them.

Our host adjusted their length by moving them to a lower or higher hole, put his hands through them as far as the wrists, then threw his figure into a statuesque posture, planting his legs widely and firmly on the ground, bracing up the well-knit body, while the arms were disposed in the suspenders as if about to shoot an arrow, and remaining in this state of immobility for some seconds. This was to give steadiness and precision in taking aim, and to acquire the habit of drawing the bow without jerking or shaking, until it had attained its greatest curvature.

He was no Tartar, and yet seemed as devoted and eager as if he were obeying the commands of a Mantchu soldier when he said:—

'To know how to shoot an arrow is the first and most important knowledge for a Tartar to acquire, for though success therein seems an easy matter, yet it is of rare occurrence. How many are there who sleep with the bow in their arms?—and, after all, how few are there who have made themselves famous? How few are there whose names are proclaimed at the matches? Keep your frame straight and firm; avoid vicious postures; let your shoulders be immovable, and shoot every arrow into its mark; then you may be satisfied with your skill.'

What a different impression would this manly fellow have made on us had a rifle been substituted for each bow, and had cartridge pouches been hanging where those nonsensical arrow-cases are placed. It is almost to be regretted that such an amount of time, skill, and patience should be thrown away upon an obsolete arm, on which he had to defend his life against an enemy possessed of the most destructive weapons. Of these he evidently knew nothing, though they had been employed effectually against his countrymen only a few months before, and was thoroughly satisfied with the national favourite; I did not think it necessary to undeceive him, and left him as strongly embued with convictions of the importance of practising archery, as were our forefathers in the times of Edward III. and Henry V. after their victories at Cresсy, Poictiers, and Agincourt.

Of the beneficial tendencies of the art, in a physiological point of view, and the physical developement produced by the severe training of those who would excel in it, there can be no doubt. The only active exercise we ever saw in China, was in a court in the Tartar portion of Peking, where four men were going through a course of arm-strengthening play, for the purpose of passing their examinations as soldiers.

They were naked to the waist, and though young, possessed chests and arms the very models of sound health and muscular strength, while their legs were anything but feeble, to judge by the liberties they took with them.

Their training consisted in throwing the 'Suay tau,' or 'Ta shih,' a nearly square stone—weighing about fifty-six pounds, with a handle cut in its substance like one of our heavy metal weights at home—from one to another, as they stood at the corners of a square marked in lines on the ground, without allowing it to fall or touch the earth. And cleverly the game was gone through.

Each man as he caught the block by the handle, which always came down with the cavity uppermost, and was made to receive the hand easily, swinging round once or twice as if he were tossing the caber. He then launched it, like a catapult or balista, high into the air, and it descended into the hand of the next athlete with a hurl sufficient to shake the nerves and astonish the eyes of a good number of muscular Christians, allowing them very little chance of catching it.

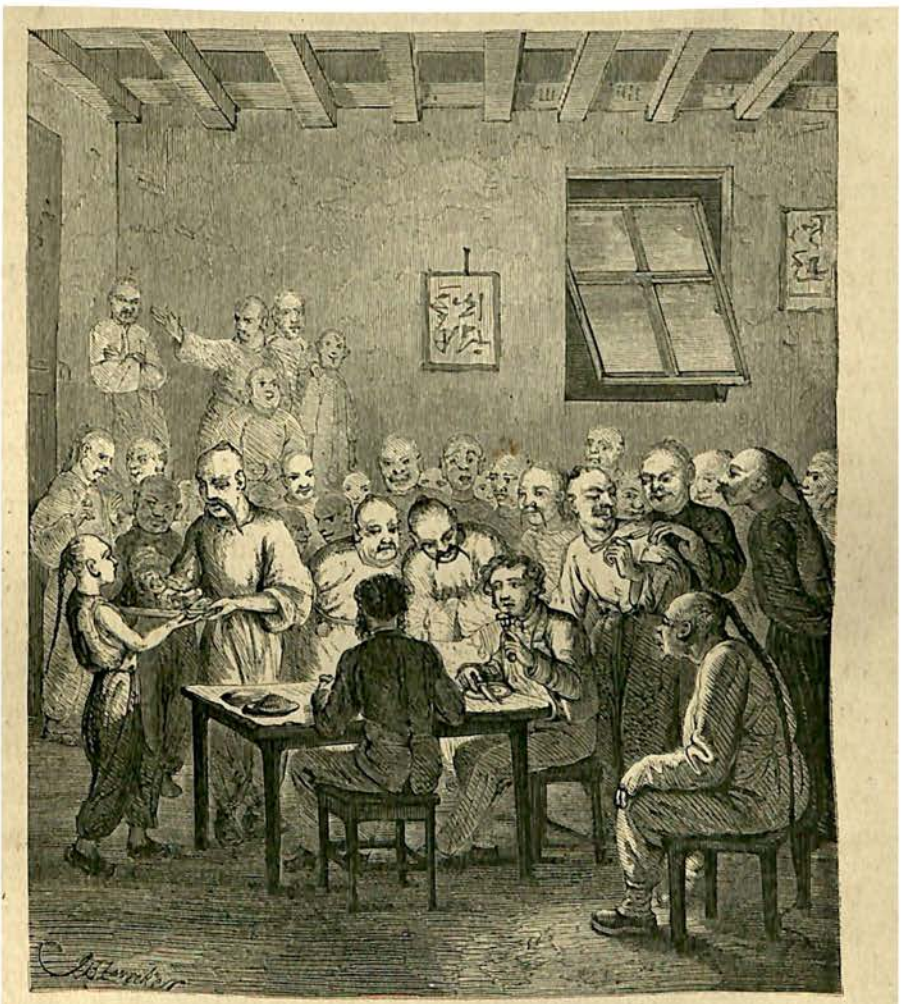
But the ground was never indented; the stone passed quietly from corner to corner with the smooth regularity of a machine so long as we remained—a period of about ten minutes; and the performers thought no more of the feat than we should have done had the object been a cricket-ball.

At Tien-tsin we have seen the same practice; heavy bags of sand being substituted for the stone—very much to the injury of finger ends and nails, we should think—but with no diminution of the exertion, nor lack of the accompanying increase of muscle, and expansion of chests. Every bundle of fleshy fibre on the trunk stood out during the exercise as if carved in bronze against a wall of bone.

But our supper is ready, and amply repays us for the delay we have suffered, and was wonderfully refreshing after eight hours passed in the saddle.

Hot soup was served up in the first clean basins we

have seen for some days; and there was rice in an enormous heap, as white as an avalanche. Then came eggs, boiled rather hard, it is true, but they were perfectly fresh. Our olfactory organs could not discern the slightest approach to that union between sulphur and hydrogen which, even in certain mineral water, is scarcely endurable. A tin of haricot



Dining before an Audience.

mutton; so the label said, had been unmercifully hacked and ripped, and was now produced as a sort of third course—a glorious finish to the feast. We were doomed to a cruel disappointment, however, for the mutton turned out to be beef, hard and indigestible. After a copious drenching

with tea, *minus* sugar, the good people of the inn were warned that we required rest, and must be left alone.

Nothing could exceed the decorousness of the behaviour of the crowds who came into the apartment and stood watching us; the quaint unsophisticated way in which they went about the examination of our kit, and the astonishment of the very old men when they saw us eating with knives, forks, and spoons, was very amusing. In their excitement they could scarcely refrain from taking them out of our hands while we used them, and pert questions to Ma-foo came belching out with endless volubility. The sight of two wine-glasses almost electrified them; nothing would satisfy them but a minute scrutiny and handling. They passed them from one to another, setting them on their bottoms, and went through the form of drinking out of them with the greatest ecstacy. The groom was interrogated in volleys and file-firing from mouth to mouth; but, though ever polite and civil towards his countrymen, and willing to concede to them every favour—a great deal too much so in many instances—he now changed his demeanour a good deal, answering their questions only when they suited him, and gratifying their curiosity in a very homœopathic fashion, as if unwilling to surfeit their inquisitiveness, or to destroy the favourable *prestige* we had created.

> 'Hungry people must be slowly nurst,
> And fed by spoonfuls, else they 're sure to burst.'

Ma-foo seemed aware of this when he gave his compatriots curt and half-evasive answers, and sometimes a mild snarl when they pressed him too hard.

One thing was particularly noticeable here—and, indeed, everywhere else on our road, when we happened to stop for the night, or but a short time at a town or village—and that was the respect paid to age.

Nothing could be more marked than the deference with which some infirm father of the hamlet was received when he

entered the room, tottering towards us to gaze with open mouth on the strangers. Every available article that could afford support was converted into a seat by those whose limbs were tired of standing, and all were so well conducted that no reason could be given for turning them out.

Yet whenever one of these patriarchs introduced himself, there was a movement among the spectators; everyone who was seated got up and welcomed him by a nod, a kind word, or a more formal waving of the joined hands and a slight inclination of the body forwards; while those who were standing, in addition to the salute, made room for him, or advanced to help him to the best place among them, where he was made a sort of centre for their regards and admiration. Every word that fell from his mouth was listened to with a grave or joyful interest until a more reverend visitor arrived, and then the first would be as ready to get up and testify his respect for his senior as his juniors had been to respect him.

Juvenal tells us, that in his day —

> 'T was impious then—so much was age rever'd,
> For youth to keep their seats when an old man appear'd.'

The Chinese, along the five hundred miles of our ride, could yield in nothing to the Romans of the vivacious poet's time, in their regard for this sentiment. In every mob or throng, in courtyard, or within doors, the wrinkled face, the snowy beard, and equally white moustache, that scarcely concealed the lips, was always there and cared for, no matter how uproarious the majority of the people might be.

In return, the old men seemed to esteem childhood, and seek its companionship at all times, as if it was not only their delight, but their duty, to regard the young with the tenderest care. The extremes of existence were often met with together in these groups —a hoary grandsire with a prattling youngster — dressed in every way alike.

We were glad to be able to find, in such out-of-the-way places, characteristics of a higher state of civilisation, and

one of the essential attributes of Christianity, especially after what we had so often read concerning infanticide and child desertion in the South. It was pleasant to witness such happy testimony to the truth of the proverb of the Wise King, 'Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.'

Another gratifying feature was the decent attire in which everybody who came to see us appeared. Though all their clothes were made of the homespun blue, white, or drab-coloured cotton, not a tatter or unseemly patch could be remarked. Everything, from the crown of the head to the shoes, was neat and tidy — much to the credit of an agricultural town in a secluded district, but two days' journey from the Great Wall.

After dinner, we allowed our visitors to look at and finger our dinner service, under the surveillance of Ma-foo. We had at first some doubts as to their honesty; but we wronged them. At the end of our journey not an article was missing of the equipment with which we started from Tien-tsin, though they were all exceedingly valuable in their eyes, and likely enough to excite their cupidity.

The landlord had waited on us himself, and hurried the servants out and in when we required anything, anticipating our wants as well as he could, and showing the greatest anxiety to make us comfortable; so we treated him to a look at a thermometer, barometer, and a pair of binocular glasses, explaining their uses as best we could.

The glasses pleased him and the others most; and, with the right or the wrong end, they imagined that they could see any distance by going to the door and merely looking through the lenses. They saw so many things about us so interesting, so mysterious, and so wonder-exciting, that it was with reluctance they left when we expressed our desire to be alone. Long after the doors were closed, every chink had its persistent peering eyes and audible whisperings, to

tell us that we were as closely watched, and our actions as eagerly criticised, as when we had but commenced the evening among them.

Our beds were made down on the *kang* — a cane mat and a railway-wrapper did not seem much of a bed—and we went to sleep under the watchful stare of many faces, doomed, it was apparent, to idle away the night by their inquisitive wonder and excitement; for, though it is a fact that the knowledge of strange people being about me, and within grappling distance, during the most helpless hours, did not dispose to feelings of security or to deep slumbers, yet I had been so pleased with the evening's halt, and found the couch so grateful — ye sleepers on feather beds lose the greatest luxury the traveller in this region of the globe enjoys, a brick-bottomed dormitory, after a fair day's exercise — that nothing but real danger could have kept me awake for many minutes.

But a storm was brewing without: murky clouds, that gathered around the mountain tops, commenced to roll in heavy folds down the hill-sides, and some time about midnight resolved themselves into rain over the 'Shih-Mun.' Everything seemed blown about by the gusty wind; thick drops pattered with a loud rattle against the paper-panes, and flew in a shower-bath through the open window above our heads; the thunder cracked and crashed with a din loud enough to awaken a man from the deepest trance; and the lurid lightning fizzed and darted about the room, making its minutest article of furniture as visible as if it had been bright daylight.

We started up, still half asleep, and closed the window; but the lightning continued to zigzag and frisk about in a very unusual and menacing way. Suddenly it was remembered that we were armed — that we each had a revolver — and that M—— had fortified himself besides with a Japanese short-sword, handy for close fibbing, and with an edge as

'thin as a razor. These things had been taken with us merely as a means of defence against robbers or thieves; and, if the worst came to the worst, as a protection, should we be attacked in the places we might have to visit.

Taking arms into the country was not countenanced, it was understood, after the winter had disappeared; but a revolver under one's head, or in a saddle-bag, need trouble nobody but the owner, if he is unmolested, and gives him a wonderful amount of confidence while trusting to the humane intentions and friendly feelings of a strange people, not considered altogether trustworthy in other parts of the Empire. Those who never sleep away from their homes or dwellings, and think that a five or six-shooter is unnecessary, when wandering among all sorts of unknown folks, and meeting with signs of their morality by the head-posts on the road-sides, we refer to Corporal Nym who avers that —

'Things must be as they may:
Men may sleep, and they may have their throats about them at that time; and some say knives have edges.'

When the lightning gave us the benefit of a more intense flash than we had yet been favoured with, and went darting in angles round the walls with a spluttering sort of noise, as we thought, we recollected a similar storm at Tien-tsin, where the electric fluid struck down the gable of a temple in which there were some soldiers, entered the room, singed a fur cap as if it had been on a blazing fire, and fused the steel hilt of a sword-bayonet, leaving its track on the scabbard, as though it had been streaked with aqua regia, besides alarming everyone in the building. The Japanese sword, it was thought, might attract the fluid in the same manner; so M—— was prevailed upon to put it as far out of the way as possible, while the revolvers were thickly done up in rags.

We again composed ourselves to sleep, but not without half-apprehensions as to the difficulty of moving through the fields in the morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MISERABLE MORNING — A RAINY DAY IN CHINA — GLIMPSES OF SUNSHINE — A THUNDERSTORM AND A THOROUGH SOAKING — CHINESE THOROUGHFARES AFTER HEAVY SHOWERS — BEING HALF DROWNED — BAD ROADS — MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS BY THE CHINESE — CHANG-LE-TOW — ITS DEFENCES — HOSTILE PREPARATIONS — ROADSIDE SCENERY — THE LOST CART — CHINESE SIGN-BOARD FOR AN INN.

BY the dead, leaden light of the morning we were aroused from as cosy a nap as tired travellers could desire, by a mournful sound — a *reveillé* of rain-drops, beating with monotonous clearness on window and wall, with a soprano and ground-bass accompaniment made by the streams from the roof furrows and the distant roll of the thunder, and a particularly dismal obligato pitter-pitter, patter-pattering in the pools all over the courtyard, that did not in the least add to the *concordia discors* of the unpropitious weather.

Staring out of the window, the picture was still more dismal. Nothing looked as we saw it last evening, save the water-lilies — but they are aquatic. The only animals stirring were the ducks, provokingly enjoying the calamity in their own silly way, and bubbling and billing at the water and mud as if their lives depended on its presence and thorough mixture — they also were aquatic.

The ponies and mules stood downcast and woe-begone, their ears and tails drooping, and their pendent heads showing a very rueful expression, in the damp-bottomed shed that was without a particle of bedding. They seemed as if a day's rest would have been more fitting in their depressed state than a resumption of labour.

Not an inmate of the house moved out; but, ensconced

below the most trivial cover, were the dotard old men with children, and the madcaps of other ages waiting for our levée with the soberest and most imperturbable equanimity possible, never moving to the right or left, seldom stirring a limb, and always keeping their faces towards the window, from which they were stayed only by the drenching rain. How people could ever be so extravagantly curious about two fellow-creatures remaining near them for but a night, was more than we then cared about discussing; but the sight was amusing enough, and, had we not been too much engrossed by the more important consideration of a start, and its likelihood of proving successful, we should have soon got the room filled again with these infatuated beings, many of whom looked as if they had lodged outside all the night.

Ma-foo and the mule-driver were ousted from their lairs, and reported themselves in our presence, in no inspiriting or affable humour, the one muttering, in reference to the weather, the guttural '*pu-how*, *pu-how*,' bad, bad; and the other grunting and hiccuping his displeasure in no measured terms. The host appeared, and is asked if the weather would relent and give us a fine day; but a doubtful shake of the head and the negative *mè-yo* settles it. We must trudge and drag our way in the rain and sludge as best we may; and, if we can get no farther, put up at some other village for the time, as there is no telling when the rain may cease, and the longer it continues the worse will the roads have become.

There was no help for it but to get off at once; so the drowsy mules are stirred up, after the wonted coercion of other mornings, and the ponies, with their hair bristling up on end, and their skins shivery and unclean, are fastened within the saddle girths, apparently much to their disgust, and dragged forth to be mounted, showing every symptom of aversion.

The hotel bill—a very mild one—was discharged with a

round of cash; breakfast was deferred until a more convenient occasion, and after vainly looking out for a few minutes to discover if there were any indications of a break in the clouds, we issued into the plashy puddles with the intention of outbraving the spiteful elements—albeit the feat must be accomplished in thin cotton 'karkee,' made only for the hot weather, and a pair of long riding-boots; for we had taken but two suits of clothes with us, and they were both of this material—waterproofs being out of the question when we started in such a good season from Tien-tsin.

Bidding our respectable landlord good-bye, or rather a hearty farewell, we presented him with one of a small parcel of Bibles in Chinese—the gift of a Tien-tsin missionary, that we had contrived to stow away in a corner of the portmanteau.

He received it with the most jubilant surprise imaginable. The cart was once more transferred to the street, and we were hobbling after it—a forlorn procession of tempest-defying mortals, through the sadly changed street, which was now a mass of mire. There was not a creature to follow us for a few yards, and only a face here and there at a door or a half-open window watched our departure.

Rainy weather in the fairest western city is a sad curtailer or rather vanquisher of out-door pleasure and convenience, notwithstanding all the aids and appliances, brought to counteract its effects; but in a northern Chinese town it is a perfect calamity, and a plague for many days after, completely putting an end to what little comfort people may have enjoyed from pedestrian or equestrian exercise. The wide streets that may have struck the observer as a grand improvement on the narrow alleys of the south, are found to be, unlike them, unpaved, and converted into sloughs of despond, through which it is sheer madness to attempt to pass, unless prompted by the most urgent duty; you must then remain utterly indifferent to a covering of highly-scented black diluvium, picked up in viscid splashes, as well as to sundry immersions

in treacherous pits, caused by the gentle somersaults, 'croppers' and 'headers' innumerable from the sides of slippery ridges and banks, set up generations ago as an apology for a *trottoir*. These, from the decaying nature of their principal constituents, quickly become a series of villanously-smelling man-traps, offering less security to the foot than the surface of a glacier, and challenging the virtues of the most potent detergents to remove their traces from the apparel.

Locomotion of all kinds for the timid is in abeyance. Horses are as much at their wits'-end, and as unsteady to ride, as they would be were they ascending step-ladders or trying to amble along a tight-rope. Chairs are not much better, and are hazardous enough from the shuffling and painful tumbling about of the coolies, who are ready to drop under you in the first ditch they meet, if they are much embarrassed. Under such circumstances a dull spell within the house is one's only resource until the sun has steamed off the abundant fluid, and walking may be resumed with thigh boots.

But if you compel yourself to scramble and jump, wade and plunge when the streets are flooded, running against and grappling with the natives in a wild effort to maintain the dignified position assigned to your species, and the purity of your garments, there is but little to reward you for your pains. Of troubles, however, you may have abundance. For example, a young jackanapes standing knee-deep in filth—they are here as fond of dabbling in dirt as Europeans of their years and class—lazily plastering a dike before a shopkeeper's door, to avert an internal inundation, will, unintentionally of course, deposit a full shovel of the compound in the leg of your boot, and grinningly shout 'Ey-yah' to express contrition.

There is no use seeking for redress on the spot; you must carry your wrongs about with you until you get home, and you go on picking your steps as tenderly as if treading on a

fathomless quagmire, and making but a few yards when you come to a place deeper than usual.

You reach the middle of it attentive to soundings, hope telling the flattering tale that you may pass it safely. Suddenly an elephantine Chinaman approaches with his petticoats closely tucked up about him, and grasped with both hands, as those of an old woman would be in similar circumstances; he wears nice white stockings and soft shoes, a kind of *chaussure* for such roads that makes one feel dreadfully catarrhish to look at; and unable longer to contain himself he comes hurling down from one of the afore-mentioned banks, on which he has been needlessly puffing and blowing in endeavouring to creep along without soiling himself. He descends like a great landslip towards you, and though self-preservation may be your dominant impulse, the fickle ground you cling to will not render you any assistance in getting out of his way.

Slush-h-h he glides to your feet, and there suddenly brought-up, he flops on his heavy back, sending a mud shower over your head, face, and body, that envelopes you as accurately as if it were a mould of plaster of Paris. In his distress he clutches at your legs, and away you go also; and lucky will you be if one or more of the slippery passengers don't lend their bodily influence to keep you down.

Sometimes the streets are so flooded that coolies make a very good trade in carrying passengers through the impassable parts on their shoulders—a nice state of affairs for the Commissioners of Public Works.

The few Chinese who have much street walking in bad weather, are generally provided with long boots, the legs of which are waterproof cotton, and the soles furnished with great spike-headed nails to penetrate the mud; bad indeed must be the condition of the European who gets one of these soles planted at a street corner on a tender instep or inflamed toe-nail. His yell of agony would startle the entire city.

Such are the streets of North China, and such are those of the great capital itself, when a heavy shower has passed over them. They then become a mixture of water and mud, slippery mounds and dirty pits, stagnant ponds and open ditches in which men and animals, carts and wagons, flounder and float distractedly, and in which all that is interesting and pleasurable appears to be submerged in filth. So it was with this town and with some others during the day's journey. The houses looked cheerless and neglected, and the few people seemed wandering about without occupation of any kind.

The road still lay for some way among the hills, which expand without apparent limitation to the northward, forming a dense gloomy wall, the lower peaks and ridges only visible now and again in the grey drizzling clouds. Whip and spur did their work, and the animals bravely did their share in pushing on; but the more the pace was increased, the more bitterly the rain pelted us. The roads became more adhesive as the narrow wheels cut deeper into the loosened sandy soil. Still we proceeded uphill and downhill, through villages surrounded by water, and through fields of millet and maize, and along by-paths behind hamlets to avoid the chances of drowning altogether.

The rain ceased for a short space in the forenoon as we left the higher ground, and struck out into the plain, still beautifully green and luxuriant; then the lower masses of cloud cleared away as if by magic—great rifts revealed themselves in those heavenward fleeces, and the glorious sun came out again among the proudest needle points of the sierra, throwing his richest golden lustre over those immediately exposed beneath him, lighting up with sprightly rays the greenish-grey of their sides, the far-off clefts, the wild gullies, and the drenched valleys, dispersing the mist wreaths that yet obscured some sweet spot on the upland, and bringing it out to the partially unfolded landscape, that now smiled

though yet in tears, as if bidding it to smile also after the discouraging weather of the morning.

As the rifts became wider, or the vapoury shreds sped across his face, their margins were lit up with a fiery suffusion of surpassing splendour that would have gladdened the hearts of a Turner, a Stanfield, and a Pyne. It gladdened ours, for it gave us promise of a fine afternoon.

The dwellings, grouped as they were in their random fashion, and so shone upon, looked exceedingly attractive, especially those which stood on the banks of streams now foaming, sparkling, and noisy as they rushed over the obstacles in their pebbly beds, and glimmered and glinted under rustic bridges, beyond which they were eclipsed by an expanse of drooping crops.

This effect, however, though very fine, was but of short duration. The road made a wide detour upwards towards the foot of the hills again, though for what reason we could not see — and as we drew nigh, the mist began to gather itself into a dark canopy of increasing density and sombre aspect. The sun retired suddenly behind it, and the wind commenced to agitate the trees and whistle about us dismally. We indulged the faint hope that it might be only a passing shower. Unconsciously, almost, we repeated Thomson's lines:—

> 'Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
> Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
> And up among the loose disjointed cliffs
> And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
> And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan
> Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.'

We were not kept long in suspense as to the nature of the tempest. The performance commenced with a most disenchanting overture; from out of the centre of a great gathering of crape-coloured clouds, hanging a short distance over our heads, streamed a sheet of lightning so vivid that

our eyes were blinded for some seconds, and this was quickly followed by a stunning crash of thunder that seemed to shake the ground beneath us. It was like the explosion of a large powder magazine, and at its conclusion we involuntarily looked to see if either of the hills had been cleft in two by the concussion.

Suddenly the rain came streaming down, not in discernible heavy drops, nor yet in 'torrents,' but in tangible sheets that almost beat us out of the saddles. Peal succeeded peal, and flash followed flash, without intermission; while the reverberations were carried backwards and forwards, and repeated times out of number among the glens and rocks, until they subsided, miles and miles away, to the weakest, that rumbled like a wagon over a hollow causeway.

We need not assert that our soaking was a complete one. Shelter of any description could not be got at, so away we ploughed and toiled, drenched to the skin, the superfluous water welling out at our boot-tops every time our legs were moved to take a fresh hold of the slippery saddle, while the thumping and clashing of the tempestuous shower against the steaming roads forbade all attempts at conversation had it been necessary, and almost blinded us.

Not a word was spoken for some miles — all the talk seemed completely washed out from us, as well as the dust and mud,—and more like shipwrecked voyagers, just landed from the surf of a heavy sea, than overland travellers, we hurried on with heads down and backs well arched, the chilly streams playfully cascading around our shoulders, and dripping in a heavy fringe from the most dependent corners of coat-skirts or sleeves.

Poor Ma-foo stood it out like a strong-minded martyr; though, as we glanced at him, if we knew that drowning awaited us the next moment, we could not have repressed our laughter. There he sat rolled up as tightly as a mummy on that eccentric crooked-legged old grey of his,— now

changed to a pale-blue,—nothing was to be seen of him but his conical straw hat, that, like the nose of a watering-can, carried the collected water in transparent jets around its brim. It gave him the appearance of a popular fountain, such as our holiday folk are familar with, at the Sydenham Crystal Palace.

Long tags of disordered blue drapery drooped loosely from the little bundle sticking so closely to its perch, and that contained the sediment of his mortality. The tempest had deprived him of the greater part of his apparel, and what was left of his personality bore no resemblance to anything save a ship's swab that had been accidentally dropped on the back of a superannuated steed fresh from Neptune's stable.

Bravely he bore his condition; indeed, the ablution had a most wholesome effect, not only on his clothes but on his person, by scouring out the furrows on his wrinkled countenance, and carrying away the incrustation that had almost obliterated the original outlines and colour of his face and skin.

The roads became more and more heavy for the mules, and many times threatened the cart with a complete deadlock in the mud and sand, not likely to be overcome in a hurry. The willing brutes, however, strained their harness in a way we have never seen equalled out of China without an expenditure of whipcord.

The driver was a very inferior specimen of his class, still he was an excellent manager of what are supposed generally to be a most headstrong and stupid breed of animals.

The Chinese muleteer has obtained an influence over these hybrids by patient perseverance, and by a sort of intuitive knowledge of their nature and disposition. This is quite astonishing to those who have seen Spaniards, Turks, and Indians handle mules of a much more docile turn than

those bred here; by means of such gentle persuasions as a few words express, they can bring them hearty and fresh from a long day's work in a manner that would gratify the disciples even of Mr. Rarey.

No Europeans, we think, could get the same amount of labour out of them as their Chinese masters, on the same miserable provender. This arises, I have been assured, from the absence of all disheartening punishment, and the liberal use of 'moral suasion.' Hence a mule that, in the hands of a foreigner, would be not only useless but dangerous to every one about it, becomes in the possession of a Chinaman as quiet as a lamb and as tractable as a dog. We never beheld a runaway, a jibbing, or a vicious mule or pony in a Chinaman's employment; but found the same rattling cheerful pace maintained over heavy or light ground by means of a *turr-r* or *cluck-k*, the beast turning to the right or left and stopping with but a hint from the reins. This treatment is extended to all the animals they press into their service. Often have I admired the tact exhibited in getting a large drove of frightened sheep through narrow crowded streets and alleys, by merely having a little boy to lead one of the quietest of the flock in front; the others steadily followed without the aid either from a yelping cur or a cruel goad. Cattle, pigs, and birds are equally cared for.

The mutual confidence existing between the mule-driver and his team seems to exist in the relationship between man here and other domesticated creatures, equally to the benefit of bipeds and quadrupeds. No punishing spur disfigures the heel of the equestrian, who rides his forty or fifty miles in a few hours, armed with a very mild whip only to assist him in emergencies, and using a primitive bridle furnished with the softest of 'bits.'

How much does he differ in this respect from the Mexican, the Turk, the Hindostanee, and other peoples we could name! The Chinese courier will get over the ground

as quickly, and with much less injury to his steed than any other equestrian; and a larger proportion of horses and mules, double and sometimes treble the average age of those less mercifully dealt with in other lands, is to be found about Peking and Tien-tsin. An animal under five years and at work is quite an exceptional case; and horses are as sound and healthy at fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years, as the great majority of our five and six year-olds,—at least, a pretty wide experience has shown this.

Away strained our team, steaming and smoking through mud and mire, as honestly bearing their drudgery as if they were to be rewarded with the best of oats in unlimited quantity, trusses of aromatic hay, and a snug stall knee-deep in soft straw, instead of being housed, as they really will, for a few hours in a cold wet shed, and put before a great wooden trough—realising the ancient standard Dunfermline pint:

'A big dish, and little in 't.'

And that little *molto di* hard straw, *poco di* as hard barley.

The Jehu has worn out the only pair of shoes he started with,—and a Chinaman, though ever so poor, objects to

'Exposing God's leather to God's weather;'

he has therefore swung himself on the near-side shaft, where he is thoroughly saturated, and keeps up an incessant *tur-r-r* and *cluck-clucking*, varied only by a small shout now and then to re-animate the energies of the fagging pair, beating with sad rhythm the left hand on the corresponding thigh, and swinging the remainder of the shoeless limb with the rigid monotonous regularity of a pendulum. This was a confirmed habit of his, and mile after mile, during many days, he practised this movement as if it formed the principal part of his duty. Not often did anything go wrong with the

harness; but when it did the mules stopped of their own accord, and if it was only the leader getting over or entangled in the traces, no help was needed to put her right again.

A little after midday it cleared up a trifle, and close to the foot of the misty hills we came in sight of the walled town of Chang-le-tow, a rather welcome haven after the storm.

On reflection it was thought unadvisable to halt inside the walls, in consequence of the excitement and *furore* our presence was sure to create; and the condition in which the place appeared favoured this conclusion. In addition to the questionable nature of the reception to be met with within the high gloomy walls that rose at the termination of the gravelly road at the west side, there was an outer defence of mud, in the ordinary Chinese system of fortification, and with the carefully smoothed face and the elaborately notched edge for small arms, that characterised the works around Tien-tsin on our arrival at that place; the whole apparently of quite recent date. There was a narrow postern-gate and bridge of planks only, for an entrance across the ditch to the inside of the work.

The whole looked as if an enemy was momentarily expected, though we could not perceive a single soldier moving within.

Rather suspicious than otherwise, we thought it but wise to reconnoitre before going farther and thrusting our heads into a net; so cantering round towards the northern side of the town, leaving the cart and Ma-foo to follow, we had time to take a leisurely survey unmolested by anyone.

Chang-le-tow might have been prepared, or was preparing, for a seven years' war, so formidable were the works, and so inaccessible were they to the fury of the enemy who might set himself down before them, and go through all the interesting formalities of a Chinese siege.

The embattled walls looked tolerably sound,—that is, they were not in ruins, and to my surprise showed marks of the trowel in sundry white lines of plaster in various places,

which, however, may have been more intended to deceive the outsider than a sincere attempt at repair.

Our eyes ran along the whole line of parapet, and peeped enquiringly through those mediæval-looking embrasures; but with the exception of a sort of sentry-box, without a sentry, standing drearily at each corner, nothing denoted immediate action. Such was my impression, but I was wrong. A more careful scrutiny made me detect three lilliputian guns over a gateway, evidently laid to surprise assailants should they venture so far from their own lines. So artfully were they concealed that, dismounted from their carriages, supposing they had ever been mounted, nothing but their muzzles showed above the sole of the embrasure. They looked like the mouths of so many decapitated soda-water bottles.

This northern gate faces the hills, which from their proximity to the town are here designated 'Chang-le-Shan,' and rise in sterile grandeur to a height of about 2,000 feet. It has also an outwork of plaster, ditched and bridged on the most narrow scale, and possesses a considerable number of temporary millet and mud huts inside for the reception of the 'braves' who are to hold this post of honour, but who have not yet arrived in their new quarters.

More formidable than all this is that flanking or detached demi-bastion, for it is hard to get a technical name in our language for things which we never saw or heard of before. It is perched on a low hill with remarkable sagacity. The front might take some active Britons in light marching order a little trouble to climb over, were a few stout Chinese with long poles able to stand on the rampart and push them down; but the clumsiest troops in the world would enter it in a few minutes by making a small round-about to the left.

We can see no cannon—probably they are still at the foundry, or the carpenter in the town may be making a few 'dummies' to soothe the alarms of the trading citizens until the blacksmith has forged as many as will make a

satisfactory noise and burn priming in dry weather. The fort is unoccupied except on the parapet, where two roguish-looking magpies are doing garrison duty until they have exhausted their chatter and preened their feathers for the next shower of rain.

What had been the cause of all this hostile preparation we were thoroughly at a loss to divine; and in our wet state, with vacant stomachs and tired nags, we did not particularly press ourselves to enquire. It was a source of congratulation to us that there was no strife, no attack or defence, or other game going on, likely to throw an obstacle in our flooded path or cause us to get into trouble, and we were content to forego the knowledge of what had created this additional proof of the military genius of the country. Possibly such bride's-cake structures were reared to train the bodies and improve the minds of Chinese military engineers, or teach militia how to defend themselves behind a lofty parapet a few inches in thickness, and explode flaky gunpowder with the loudest report without burning out their eyes. Perhaps they were raised to satisfy the inspector of fortifications that praiseworthy efforts were being made to add to the security of the empire—or mayhap to protect themselves from some offshoot of the rebellion raging not very far off, but of whose outbreak in this direction we have not heard.

Hungry men have no ears for anything but what relates to present internal wants; so we betook ourselves back again to meet the cart, which it was dreaded had come to grief on the road, it had been so long in trying to overtake us.

In returning we noticed what, in our attention to these non-picturesque matters, we had missed coming up—another of those little snatches of roadside scenery that are always acceptable, even in the most unfavourable weather. It looked pretty, even under such a pall-like sky as that we then had—deadening everything beneath it. A long way up, on the steep face of a granite hill, a flight of steps, diminished by

distance to the size of the cutting ridges on the edge of a fine file, ascends to a toy-gateway, and then, becoming more perpendicular, runs up—a black line—to a narrow terrace enclosed by a low stone wall, on each side of which are two temples with red pillars, in style something between the Swiss châlet and the Turkish kiosk. They were set off by flat-topped fir-trees, whose dark green shade contrasts well with the dusky blue hill and the red hue of the pillars; another flight of invisible steps, through a number of tiny gates up to another terrace with curious atoms of buildings, intended possibly for dwelling-houses for the priests, who, like their fellows in other parts of the empire, and like the monks of the West, past and present, have the happy knack of combining religion with comfort, beauty, and salubrity of location in the most inviting spots of nature, and adding other trifles that help to prolong and render felicitous such valuable lives.

The picture was an agreeable one, and set in that wide frame of everlasting rock was striking enough; but where was the tardy cart and its attendants all this time? We rode back to the spot where we left it, but not a trace could the rutted and flooded road give of its whereabouts. I galloped round three sides of the walls, but could not discover anything of the missing vehicle. Enquiries are made of several countrymen, but they hopelessly shake their heads and give a grunt, and stupidly avow they do not understand what we say.

We rush up roads among the hills where wheel tracks and fresh prints of shod hoofs make us believe they have gone. But, no; they are lost. The dilemma is a serious one. All we possess is in the cart; money—everything. In vain we dash towards a circle of children who are playing at some game in the middle of the way, sure that if our servants have interrupted their sport they must remember it, and be able to tell which way they have gone—they fly

before us, screaming as if we were savages or wild beasts, and in a trice are hid from our sight.

Anxiety, anger, and mortification, now gave way to despair. We must enter the town—chance our reception there—and search through the streets for the vagrants, though they must know that we did not intend to go through the place, and ought to have followed on our steps.

We cross the drawbridge — the three sides of the town, we have remarked, are defended by these extra precautions, but the ditch could be jumped by an active schoolboy — we pass through a wide space filled with empty huts, and come to the brick wall surrounded by a wide moat filled with water and filth of such an offensive quality, that for defence it must be unequalled—nothing living, I am confident, could exist near it for a few hours but Chinese and cesspool rats. Not a single soldier was to be seen either at the gateways or in the streets.

The town was mucid and quaggy in the extreme; once or twice we found the thoroughfares unfordable, and had to make a bend round to avoid total loss, not only of our ponies but ourselves. True, we saw the place under disadvantageous circumstances; but when are you to see a Chinese town to advantage? In fair weather and in foul; at sunrise, midday, and sunset, and at all seasons of the year, have we watched but never caught the happy moment for seeing such sights favourably. This period some people say never was and never will be. Perhaps it never can be while our friends wear their diminished locks twisted down their backs — they must ever be going farther and farther to the rear of those civilised nations who impersonify Time as an old gentleman wearing a forelock on his brow instead of a tail behind, by which they are keeping him from leaving them altogether, as had happened to these Celestials.

On we went, up one street and down another, followed by the idle mob who care not for the difficulties attending the navigation of their town but steer direct in our wake; in doing which they splash many a white-skirted shopkeeper who, having been warned of our approach, had rushed to his low door to mark the peculiarities of two half-drowned strangers.

Galling do we find it to ask anyone questions; for no sooner do the roystering young imps hear our voices, than with one accord they raise a shout of mirth, in which the elders — childish as they are — take part; we are, therefore, forced to remain speechless in the midst of our affliction.

The town has been crossed; the trying ordeal of another ditch has been overcome, and we are in a suburb dirtier, and consequently busier, than the town. Here the people received us in a calmer and a more obliging manner.

Seeing us look to the right and left—up every lane and round every corner — they at once divined the cause, and pointed a long way in front. There, encompassed by a rout of eager folks, we at last come upon the vexatious vehicle, with Ma-foo, miserable tissue-paper atomy that he was, standing at his ease, looking carelessly about him. As soon as he perceived us, he scrambled up into his saddle, and hailed us with a grin and a salute, indicative of his pleasure and his anxiety on our account.

To improve our condition another outbreak of the storm overtook us, and as no inn in the locality could entertain us, we had to sally out into the road again, thumped heartily by the heavy rain-drops.

After passing two or three miles along a sandy road, close to the foot of the hills, with the land in some places covered by great boulders of granite, and stray cottages of a very poor description, we reach a wretched hovel at the village of Chow-foo, where the hills have been named Chow-foo Shan—

with nothing to distinguish its character from the other dwellings save the sign-*board* of an inn in these parts — viz., five red hoops and a scoop of basketwork suspended from a pole. At four o'clock in the afternoon we were preparing our breakfasts, and we required no tonic to give us an appetite.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD-FASHIONED TOWN — MUTILATED FEET OF CHINESE WOMEN — AN INSPECTION AND ITS RESULT — THE DEFORMITY CONSIDERED A PROOF OF GENTILITY — CHINESE DOGS — TOWN SCAVENGERS — LOSING OUR WAY — CHANGE IN COSTUME — COMFORTABLE DRESS — WARM CLOTHING — ENORMOUS BOOTS — A CHINAMAN'S WARDROBE — CHINESE PIGS AND THEIR TREATMENT — SINGULAR DELICACIES — A SUSPICIOUS INN, AND ITS OCCUPANTS — THE OPIUM-SMOKER — USE OF THAT DRUG — ITS EFFECTS EXAGGERATED.

ONLY one brief hour was allowed us to recruit; at its termination, without changing our costume, we started off again to make another score of miles.

The time we had purposed accomplishing the journey in was very limited; we knew not what was before us, and the means of returning to Tien-tsin again were very doubtful. We wavered between taking the chance of meeting a small trading vessel ready to start from New-Chwang — one of the five northern ports opened to our trade — chartering there a junk, and trusting to wind and weather to find our way across the Gulf in about a fortnight, or having to ride back the way we were now going. We were afraid of over-staying our leave, and therefore thought it best to hurry on while progress was possible.

The way was dull enough and the evening was lowering; the villages looked very *triste* and lonely in the midst of so much water and sloppy ground, but in fine days they must have worn a much merrier aspect.

A large old-fashioned town—all Chinese towns are old-fashioned, but this one appeared more so than any we had yet seen — was passed through.

It looked as quiet as if all the inhabitants had gone to

bed, but possessed good houses built of stone and brick, neatly finished off, and the almost flat roofs tiled or thatched with straw. Lots of courtyards, gardens, and trees, with wide uncared-for streets dividing them, threw the houses rather out of the way, so that few of the inmates saw us pass. There were some large shops, but no business was being transacted, owing perhaps to the wet; this had also suspended the labours of the workmen at an open-air theatre, that was in process of being rigged up and fitted out by the aid of a cart propped horizontally on two legs in the centre of an open space. A few boards were laid across its sides for the struts and strides of the wandering wearers of the sock and buskin, and a millet-stalk framework screened three sides of the stage from view, whereon a table and two stools did duty as stage furniture.

Where a group of willows grew before a wide doorway, and partially formed an arbour, shielded from the rain by their overlapping branches, a female assembly was being held. It was our bad fortune to render its dissolution necessary, and to scare the blooming maids and withered matrons almost into hysterics—if such a civilised complaint has yet made its appearance in the flowery land—as they waddled off their several ways on their pettitoes with the most lamentable stumpiness.

Here is another of those morbid fancies that, balanced against the more reasonable fashions and tastes of the people of this country, far outweighs them all, and outrages the common sense of every rational foreigner. Give them credit to the full for the good traits they possess; call them the most industrious of beings on the globe, the most promising and improvable of all eastern nations; laud to the utmost those institutions which, we are told to believe, have guided them through long ages, and permitted them to see the glimmer of a modern world and a new civilisation, and to hold intercourse with a new race of men some twenty

centuries younger and yet more advanced in whatever pertains to human greatness, and then show us these Ægipanes—these females with the mutilated feet, who walk as we used to imagine 'puss in boots' must have done; and our admiration is suspended.

We can hardly say a word in favour of any people, who would, for an hour even, force the tenderest and fairest of creation into such an appalling amount of suffering, deformity, and inconvenient helplessness. Look at these poor creatures

Extremes of Fashion.

now scuttling away in as bad plight as if some inhuman monster had amputated their feet from the ankles, balancing themselves with extreme difficulty, supported by the walls, or clinging to anything that may in the least aid them in progression and prevent their downfall; while they move their stiffened legs and plant their wasted heels and crushed toes, which are hid in doll-like shoes, smaller than any we ever saw at Canton, Shanghai, or even Peking, just as a

Chelsea pensioner would do if he tried to walk with two wooden substitutes for his nether limbs, without a staff,—then say what any other family of the human species could show to equal such a sight.

We drop civilisation and turn to Savagedom, but can find no equivalent wilful barbarity. The flattened head, the sawn or chipped teeth, the nose or lips deformed by heavy rings, or the ear-lobes pierced and widened to such dimensions that they serve as wallets, cannot fitly be compared to this fashion in the sad spectacle it affords, and the utterly abject condition of the women who are subjected to it.

Some people may point to the stays of occidental lands, but the very worst cases of tight-lacing can never induce effects so deplorable as those which astonished us for many months after our arrival in the country. It is impossible to look at a crippled woman treading on the very extremity of the dwarfed heels of her shoes, with the atrophied ankles and instep wound up in stripes of cotton cloth, making only a few inches at a step, with the arms swaying and body ungracefully erect, without a strong feeling of pity for her misfortune, and without showering maledictions on the heads of those wretches who introduced the villanous practice, and those rulers who permit it to be perpetuated.

Ah, Le-how-choo, a heavy load of blame lies at your tombstone, if what tradition says be true, that you, in the early days of the Five Dynasties, commanded your beautiful concubine and slave, Yaou, to tie up her feet in unyielding rolls of silk, so that their natural perfections might be obliterated to suit your depraved wish, and the matchlessly formed instep and toes be transformed into a repulsive stump, supposed to vie in shape with the new moon!

Curiosity impelled me once to be one of a party in examining an uncovered foot. The young woman was not at first very ready to remove the shoe and the collection of bands around the limb, to satisfy the strange request we

made, but a few dollars quickly dissipated her reticence, and also induced another to increase the exhibition. It was no treat. The removal of the bandages was like the exhumation of a half-decomposed body, and made our party close their mouths and hold their nostrils, much to the augmented astonishment of the young ladies, while we stretched our necks to see all as quickly as possible.

No toe was visible but the big toe; the others had been doubled under the sole, with which, after weeks of suffering and excruciating pain, they had become incorporated, and were not to be distinguished from it, except by the number of white seams and scars that deeply furrowed the skin. The instep was sadly marked by the vestiges of large ulcers that had covered its surface, consequent on the violence used to bend it up into a lump; and, in form as well as colour, was like a dumpling; while the limb from the foot to the knee was withered and flaccid as that of one long paralysed. The display was repugnant in every way—we fled, and have been careful ever since to be absent when any more of these living mummies were about to be unrolled.

It is an extraordinary circumstance that the further north one goes, the more universal the odious fashion becomes. At Tien-tsin, in the Chinese portion of Peking, and in some of the larger towns we have visited, a woman or a female child with unmutilated feet was never seen, unless by some very rare chance, and then they were supposed to be Tartars (as the diamond eyes at Lanchow for example). But the amazing thing is, the devotion of the fair sex in the rural districts to the disabling custom. Everyone had the Pandean hoof as scrimply developed as if she were competing for the leadership of the *beau ton* in this respect, regardless of the state of inefficiency into which she was thrown. She is unfit to work out of doors or in the courtyard without some prop, and must manage household affairs in a very unbecoming and toddling way—evidence sufficient, one would be inclined

to say, to open the eyes of the frugal toiling husband to the vanity and vexation, besides loss, caused by his wife's pride.

From the merchant's favourite dame to the old beggar-woman and her child in the reeking *purlieus* of the lowest parts of the town, where a trifle must be hard to gain, all bow to the self-imposed punishment, though for what reason they know not. It is the fashion—their mothers and grandmothers did it, and so must they; did they leave their feet untampered with and unswathed, they would be like the outside barbarians. In short they look upon it as the mark of a polished nation, and those who have it not are held in low esteem.

A lady at Hongkong informed me that once she had two native female domestics, one with cramped, the other with natural feet, and that they were always quarrelling about these articles. She who was able to move about her work readily grumbled at the other because she had in consequence more than her share of labour, and hesitated not to tell the other that her lame toes were the cause; the fashionable sister, who always assumed haughty airs towards the plebeian because of the 'golden lilies,'* would effectually silence her for a few minutes by declaring in the sweet-sounding *lingo*, 'Ah, why for you so talkee me? My mudda (mother) number one woman: hab makee me alla plopa (all proper).'

I cannot understand why, when the conquering Tartars introduced, or rather stuck on the Chinese heads the stamp of their potency, in the whimsical tail or tress which they themselves wore, they did not abolish the thoroughly Chinese institution of the small foot, or make their own women adopt it. In all likelihood their acute judgment at that time showed them the deteriorating effects of a practice that would soon reduce the robust and active female population of their clans into weak silly toys, fit only to be nursed, and therefore unworthy of such a manly race.

* The name for crippled feet.

If the one extremity of the body is held sacred to an inviolable and unalterable custom, its antipodes at any rate is not; for just as two of the alarmed gossips limp through a door in front of us, we see that their manner of twisting up the hair differs widely from that followed in the country we have passed through. Here it is dressed and gummed in the form of an ingot of sycee silver, which is something in shape like a cream jug, or an oval cup wide at top and narrow at the bottom, with a piece scooped out of the edge at each side, and with bright-coloured flowers fastened by, or stuck about skewers and pins, that stand out like porcupine quills. Though their necks be ever so dirty, and their faces not much better, yet the hair must be as exquisitely trimmed and plastered, according to the local rage, as that on a wax model seen in a London barber's shop window.

It was a great relief to pass quietly through a town, and miss the clatter and din that had attended our progress hitherto. If the rain had made us unhappy one way and retarded our advance, it at any rate drove the mob from our path and allowed us to pass on much more pleasantly than if the brawling voices of countless throats had gathered behind and before us.

Only a troop of the common dogs of the country—outcast wanderers that they are—gave us a parting salute of savage barkings before the last houses in the outskirts had been passed, and then tore away into the lanes and fields when a whip was shaken at them.

It is somewhat curious to find this breed of the *Canis familiaris* so widely diffused over the world, and abounding in every corner in China that one chances to put foot in. Closely allied to the Pariah dog of India, the savage pests of Cairo and Egypt generally, those of Syria, and those snarling droves which we have been so often obliged to pelt off with stones by moonlight, in the narrow streets of Stamboul,—the Pariah dog of North China is, like them, allowed to breed

and to infest the towns and villages free from disturbance, to congregate on the plains or in the fields during the day, or to kennel in the graveyards; while at night they prowl about the streets like our scavengers at home, sweeping off the quantities of filth and trash that strew the thoroughfares. Though the Chinese have no religious scruples with regard to the dog, like the Hindoos and Mohammedans, yet the animal is neglected by them, and neither made a companion of, nor yet employed in any capacity, unless as a watch-dog, or in a very mild kind of sport which I may speak of hereafter. It is slightly different from the southern Chinese nomad, which White, in his 'Natural History of Selborne,' describes very accurately; bearing an outward likeness to the Highland sheep-dog of Scotland, and to those painted on the tomb of Roti at Beni Hassan twenty-three centuries before the Christian era. It is surprising that the breed should so long retain its characteristic form and peculiarities amid the vicissitudes of climate and neglect, and the introduction of other varieties, to which at Tien-tsin and Peking a free intermixture of other races had given birth.

Uncared for by the Chinese, hunted by Europeans, to whom it proves an endless source of annoyance by its nocturnal howlings, barkings, and noisy fights, and covered with mange and sores, the service it renders is yet great; for without it and the pig, as sanitary agents, heaven only knows what the Central Flowery Land would become in a short time. Its mission is a most disgusting one, and we would rather see this faithful and devoted friend of man cared for by the family, than find it the devourer of their filth, and the object of their disregard.

The work is gone through in a systematic manner; every dog having its allotment in a certain district of a town from which it must not intrude upon that of others, without the penalty of being half worried. Their tastes, as may be inferred, are not over nice, for they hesitate at no kind of diet.

Can anyone who has seen these canine vultures in the deserted villages in the neighbourhood of Peking a few days after an engagement, forget the sensation of horror he experienced, when inadvertently he startled a swarm of them from feasting on the body of a dead Chinaman in some lonely spot?

The streets and the houses contain mongrels as innumerable as those of any English town. We have seen dogs lodged and fed with some care, probably in consequence of their scarcity and value as pets. Among these the turnspit, the pugheaded lap-dog, and the delicate toyish Japanese poodle have been recognised; but more interesting than all, is the Shantung terrier from the province of that name, and which, for affection, tender sagacity, and purity of breed, is equal to the finest Skye terrier, to which it bears a very striking, if not complete resemblance.

These latter are very scarce and dear, and when obtained a European has great difficulty in gaining their friendship. From the long soft bluish-white hair that conceals their bodies and almost obscures their eyes, the Chinese call them the 'silken-haired dogs.' There is another variety brought from Mantchuria for hunting purposes—a sort of hybrid hound as tall as our greyhound, and in some points resembling it, but so deficient in the sense of smell, and so slow-paced, as to be almost useless to Europeans.

On departing from this town, the roads, which lay in many places very low, were like mill-dams, and entirely precluded any hopes of getting through them without some accident; so we struck off into bypaths and devious tracks, with our faces still determinedly looking to the north-east—our course for that part of the Great Wall we must penetrate, if we are to reach it at all—trusting to our driver to find gaps in the millet through which he might get our humble equipage. The two mules tore at their work, the driver shouted and turr-ed, our ponies shuffled away, and we

covered four or five miles in as wild a storm of wind and rain, thunder and lightning, as the most ardent lover of nature in her angry moods could seek for.

We had been plashing half stupefied through bewildering thickets of tall-stalked grain that did not shelter us in the least from the torrents that fell, and had got far into the wide plain, without a single landmark or prospect of a village. Seeing beyond as much of what lay before us as a twelve feet wall would permit, we were satisfied that if a night in such a situation was to be spared us, it was high time to enquire for some place where we might lay our heads. But not a soul was to be seen. The attendant Ma-foo was inconsolable; and the carter incomprehensible. After wheeling down footpaths to the right and left, our guide grew confused and pulled up, confessing that he did not know the way. He had led us into an inextricable wilderness of green crops, where we stood completely puzzled and lost; there was no obliging divinity to help us out of the labyrinth, and a canopy above showered down never-ceasing water-spouts from a source as black as Lucifer's dress waistcoat.

A brief consultation was held; a dive was made by one of us through the water-laden barrier towards where the main road ought to be; and about half a mile's pursuit of the treacherous strip of brown earth, led to a group of huts. A long series of interrogations was necessary before our latitude and longitude could be fixed, and in an hour afterwards we were picking and plunging along what was said to be the main road. It might have been an aqueduct or a canal in ruins for anything we saw to the contrary. I resolved never again to forsake the genuine line of country, let it be ever so hazardous.

The floods from the mountains rushed across us like mill-streams, gurgling over the thick rocky *débris*, like the bubbling gasp of dozens of drowning men; the roadside houses standing lonely and closed, looked so many *morgues* or haunted buildings; and the people striding past in the

gloom, without condescending to proffer a nod, a smile, or even a stare, but rather averting their heads, might readily have been mistaken for ghosts; while every tree seemed to have a head-cage lashed round its trunk under the dripping bowed-down branches that mourned for the fate of the victims.

'Twas a dismal evening, with the whole of visible nature gasping under an acute dropsy and all but moribund. Never did I feel less sentimental, seldom more destitute. At last the rain almost ceased as a better sort of a ditchy road opened up — though the sky was still inky — and peasants and tramps began to come out and resume their toil or travel. Some of the latter appeared to be nearly as saturated as ourselves, and a few were miserable in the extreme, so far as outward signs went, but were lively enough, at times cackling out a cheerful snatch of some old-world ditty, and shouldering their meagre all on the shaft of a lance, a hoe, or a walking-stick, as if they were supremely happy, paddled on, they reminding us that

> 'The needy traveller, serene and gay,
> Walks the wide heath, and sings his toils away.'

An odd change has taken place in the clothing department of the better class of wayfarers and villagers, which we cannot omit jotting in our note-books, as, if not smacking keenly of novelty, it certainly does of economy.

Almost everybody out of China knows how a Southern Chinaman is dressed; how his long flowing and wide robes, though of a different cut rather, are after the fashion of the East Indians, the Turks, Persians, and Egyptians, and all those people who, inhabiting warm relaxing regions, require room and freedom in their apparel during the indolent and sedentary lives they pass for so many months in the year. And we have all had our laugh at the ridiculously-shaped bedgownish coat that almost sweeps the ground, the dang-

ling sleeves which hide the hands and slovenly depend about a foot beyond the finger-ends, and the clumsy shoes that look more like coal-scuttles than articles to protect the feet and allow of free locomotion.

After a few months in the country, however, our preconceived notions suffered greatly from the daily attacks made on them, and before a winter had quite passed away we saw cause to alter them altogether. I now think that, with all our modern civilisation and advancement, the Chinese are more appropriately dressed, so far as ease, comfort, and necessity are concerned, than the Western nations, and that their fashions are founded on a wiser philosophy and a sounder reasoning than our own.

In his ordinary or holiday suit of the lightest cotton, crêpe, or silk materials, made up loosely, and without imposing any restraint on the movements of the body or on the free circulation of air beneath its ample width, the Chinaman looks a far less uncomfortable being than the Englishman who, in summers scarcely less oppressive than those of China, condemns himself to imprisonment in a cloth garment of the scantiest proportions, in which he performs nearly all the duties of life.

Induce a Chinaman if you can to sheath his limbs and body in a *rig-out* of black buckskin, cut, buttoned, and braced so tight that he can scarcely move or breathe; wedge his faultless small feet into a pair of black leather boots, thrown two or three inches off the natural horizontal level of the sole by high heels; put his liberty-loving neck in unrelenting *limbo* by a stiffened band of linen, over which you must wind another starched bandage as closely and as securely tied in front of his windpipe as if he had suffered a fracture of some one of the cervical vertebræ; carefully fit on his long taper fingers and over his perspiring palms, the dressed epidermis of a rat, a cat, or a kid, so prepared as to be impervious to the air; then launch him into a ball-room

on a sultry July evening, cause him to jump, wheel, and skip over the slippery floor at the rate of ten miles an hour in near approximation to an elderly lady, rather stout and calorific, whom he must aid in going 'the pace,' and if you are not directly guilty of the poor mortal's death, never man was. 'Tortured to death' would assuredly be the verdict of a jury of his countrymen, and that, too, by savages or madmen.

The adaptability of the Chinese costume for summer wear is no less so for the severe cold of northern winters. Its essential parts in hot weather are a loose jacket, or long gown, worn over a pair of lower limb covers,—a little wider than knickerbockers to be sure, but made on the same principles of freedom and comfort,—the bottoms are confined by stockings or socks, and the legs extend from the ankle to the knee (for how many centuries have our friends worn this new and most commendable fashion of other lands ?), and the feet wear the damp-repelling thick-soled cool shoes.

In winter when the thermometer falls below zero, and the wind is bitingly sharp, a great change takes place in the character and quality of these garments, and though their houses are not at all adapted for this season, by their devices in the way of clothing, they manage to maintain an agreeable and healthy warmth and defy the chilly rigours of the day or night.

With the richer classes this is done by means of expensive furs brought from the mountains and forests of Mongolia, Mantchuria, and Siberia ; and if one can judge by the exhibitions of these luxuries in the shops of Tien-tsin and Peking, the supply must be a large and profitable one. Of these the sable appears to be the most highly prized, as it is, perhaps, the most valuable ; but a good deal of patience and skill is shown in making up the superior robes from several kinds of fur of various colours into fantastic patterns;

while the more abundant grey squirrel and ermine are also favourites, though used more to line female dresses.

The silver fox, deer, and antelope tribes furnish a large proportion of the soft skins worn by the middle classes, all being beautifully prepared and quite equal to those exported to England and sold in the best shops.

But the great flocks of sheep and lambs beyond the Wall give by far the largest share of warm apparel to the poorer people, in the unlimited supply of perfectly preserved black or white wool-covered skins: even the meagrely haired pelt of the unborn lamb is pressed into use and forms one of the dressiest, as it is one of the highest-priced, articles of winter attire. The robes and tunics of the wealthier portion of the community are either made of satin, silk, or Russian cloth, and lined with these heat-retaining mediums, or are altogether composed of furs, inside as well as out.

The satin is more generally preferred, and one long vestment of this, called the 'Pou-dza,' with its heavy lining, reaches almost to the heels, and is fastened over the right breast by buttons and loops. It has several long slits in the skirt at the sides and back, to give room in walking in the bulky clothing underneath, or to allow of the tails being tucked up in riding or sitting. It is the gala toga of the well-to-do man, only to be used on grand occasions, when his arms will be flourished about in the long sleeves, and the unsightly cuffs trimmed so elaborately with brown sable, and which contain the usual pocket equipment of a European, will be flapping about below his hands, protecting them from the cold. Outside of this, in very cold days, is the 'Tou-dza,' a shorter and wider covering, lined or composed altogether of a more weighty fur, with wide sleeves barely reaching beyond the elbows.

The head is covered by a quilted satin cap with a wide everted brim, which is faced with sable, the pelage of the sea-otter, or that of the premature lamb, the crown being surmounted by

silk fringe, and, if an official, the button or ball. At other times a small satin skull-cap is worn with a red ball of silk on the top, and a pendent tassel of the same, with a large pearl, a coloured stone, or the character for longevity worked in gold thread, in front; and sometimes a turn-down collar of velvet or fur lies low on the neck of the dress.

With the exception of the 'Shua-dza,' or large black satin boots with massive whitened soles, which encase the feet and legs, this is all that can be seen of a Tien-tsin worthy as he walks along, or is carried in his chair on a winter's day, the very picture of contentment and good nature. When compelled to move about on very cold days, another sort of cap, thickly quilted, is used; and as it is furnished with a fur-covered lap, this is folded down over the brow and ears in a very snug way: and we know that underneath their outer clothing, many jackets may lurk comfortably, and that at least one pair of voluminous silk trousers—thickened to the size of bolsters by a cotton wadding—are doing their duty.

The middle classes, that is those who are dressed in an intermediate style as regards quality of materials, do not differ much in the cut of their over-coats from the higher ranks; but the satin is often exchanged for cloth, or even cotton, in everyday wear; and the costly furs for cheaper ones, or for fine sheepskins, while the Tou-dza of the mandarin is curtailed in its proportions to become the 'Ma-gwa' of the inferior.

Poor people, such as those we are now among, are glad to take any warm clothing they can get, and their ingenuity provides them with habiliments qualified to meet all emergencies. They have recourse to the skins of sheep, dogs, wolves, and even of cats, but place their chief reliance on the thickly quilted blue cotton 'meannow,' coats and trousers of the same material increased to bulky dimensions by being padded loosely about the body, while the legs are additionally

fortified by the 'tau-koo' or leggings of thick stuff pulled on over the trousers; as they wrap tightly round the ankles, and reach nearly to the body, and are secured by tapes to the sash round the waist, which sash sufficiently holds jacket and trousers close to the person without restraining or confining the movements of body or limbs, at the same time that it adds much to the comfort of the wearer.

It would be difficult to guess the number of suits of clothes covering the exterior of an out-of-doors Chinese during one of the severest days in January; but it must be something extraordinary, and in many cases consists of the whole of his wardrobe. A certain old fellow not far from our quarters in Tien-tsin, who made a small fortune by selling charcoal, coal-dust balls, and warm water to the servants, assumed an alarming size in the depth of winter. From being a spare sort of chap he had suddenly reached the dimensions of a Falstaff around his corporation, until at last he could scarcely get in at the door of the booth he had fitted up for himself. In February the weather began to be less severe; the sun made itself slightly felt at midday; the ice on the river was becoming 'slushy,' and the stout old gentleman then began the slow process of collapse, becoming small by degrees, if not beautifully less, as the temperature increased. Before the ice had quite disappeared from the shady recesses of the Peiho's banks the sun came out in a blaze, and one hot morning in March we found that he had regained his modest outline, and was once more equipped with but a pair of ordinary blue bags on the nether limbs. The superfluous garniture, instead of being left on the ground near his haunts, like the exuviæ of the serpent, was intrusted to the custody of his uncle at the sign of the Dragon's Head.

All endeavour to protect the head during the winter by some means or other, and generally employ felt-caps of various shapes for that purpose; and thick felt or sheepskin socks to guard their toes are in constant use. The felt made

by the Northern Chinese is excellent. Besides its employment in this way as an article of dress by the lower orders, it is universally prized as matting for the 'kangs,' both in summer and winter: so far as we could learn, indeed, this is the only material to the manufacture of which the wool of the sheep is devoted.

Immense sheepskin cloaks—the woolly side in—are also worn when occasion requires, either as an invulnerable outer defence in the streets, or as a blanket by night. People from the country, bringing in produce to Tien-tsin, present a very primitive, almost savage, appearance muffled up in these coarse wraps; with a great dog, goat, or wolf-skin cap burying their heads and three-fourths of their faces in its shaggy depths, leaving scarcely anything else to be seen but a dense fringe of icicles depending from their moustaches.

One thing worthy to be remembered, with regard to the northern costume, is this—that however much the body and limbs may be wrapped up in clothes and warm materials, the neck is always—according to our observation—left exposed to the weather, no matter how cold it may be. This apparent neglect seems to be the means of keeping them free from coughs and colds during a very inclement season, and may also secure them a tolerable immunity from 'Lou-peng,' or phthisis, which, in answer to our enquiries, we were told is known here, though somewhat rare. The ears of all classes are especially defended from the risk of frost-bite by curious little capsular appliances of silk or cotton, neatly embroidered and fitting exactly on the auricular conch, called 'urh-tau,' or ear covers, lined with squirrel or rabbit-skin, and retained in their places by a thin connecting cord that passes round the chin or the upper lip.

The aim of every Chinaman, in summer, is to keep himself as cool and unhampered by clothing as possible. In this he succeeds admirably, and in a way that would excite the envy of the inhabitants of other countries. In winter his whole

attention is devoted to maintaining the limbs and body in a genial temperature, by means of the materials so bountifully to be found near them.

He seems to attach far more importance to keeping the body warm by judicious clothing than by heated apartments or stoves; and in this way possibly escapes those annoying influenzas and catarrhs so prevalent in countries where warm air is adopted, and where less attention is paid to the evil effects of high temperatures within doors and low without. People who remain for hours in a superheated apartment, and then sally out inadequately fortified by non-conducting wrappers against a rigorous degree of cold, must greatly disarrange the circulatory system.

The Chinaman feels changes of weather as much as any other man, perhaps more so, but he has the wisdom to watch, and be prepared for them. For instance, in hot weather the labourers are obliged to toil as at any other time, during which they perspire copiously. Under their thin cotton jackets they wear a capital sort of reticulated shirt, made either of cord alone, wrought something like a fishing net, or with portions of the smooth stem of a fine grass strung on the cord, to make it pleasanter to, and less apt to be moistened by, the skin. Over this the cotton covering lies, but it never touches the body; while the air passes readily through, evaporation goes on naturally, the surface is kept in its normal condition, and the dangers of a saturated vestment are obviated. What a quaint yet simple design, one too that the thoughtful European has not imagined! Perhaps it may follow the use of knickerbockers.

In this neighbourhood the inhabitants appear to have discarded all the silks, cottons, and cunning webs, and move about as if they challenged the densest thunder shower that ever poured from the sky, with nothing over their yellow skins but a mantle—a regular thatch—a first-rate waterproof of rushes—more homely and primitive, but more suited

to such a country than any that Mackintosh could turn out—plaited so artfully, and so neatly, that not a drop of moisture can get through.

There they go, with great-brimmed straw hats on their heads, and these bristly envelopes over their backs, like so many porcupines walking on their hind-quarters, with their legs bare, and only a pair of straw sandals to preserve their soles from the sharp stones. In the south, the

A Pig-driver.

poor make a cloak from the bracts of the palm, and it does tolerably well; but here there is no palm, only rushes and straw. Though the Northerners don't care for, or dread, the rain half so much as the Southerners, their fabrics are better made, and more convenient than those of palm leaves.

Working onwards, we came across some strangely clad Gurths—thralls of some Sinensian Cedric—walking at the

rate of about a mile an hour behind large droves of pigs, but without a dog, and armed only with a long whip, that always lay at rest over their shoulders, their charge being lean and willing enough to get along without any need of a stimulus from behind. These lusty drovers had also divested themselves of the cottons wherewith they had left their last night's quarters, rolled them up in a bundle slung over the shoulder, and looked cool and dry underneath a great yellow square of oiled paper pulled about them.

What can I say concerning those porkers waddling through the mire in black lines on their way to fair or market, except that they are average samples of the North China pig? They can have but a remote relationship to the Oriental wild boar, said to be the progenitor of the domestic hog of China, or to that dainty little, obese, white or black, fine-skinned animal of the South, which has been bred and eaten by the son of Ham for the last forty-nine centuries! There is as great a difference between them as exists between the savage unreclaimed boar of the forest, and the agricultural pets of prize notoriety. If they were seen in an out-of-the-way wilderness or jungle, grubbing at the roots of trees, nothing could save them from instant immolation by the hunter, who would pronounce them very ugly specimens of wild pig. They are as gaunt as a hungry wolf; of a bluish-black colour; wearing an arched back, sharp as the keel of a clipper ship; sides as flat as a door, with hip bones projecting from them like the eaves of a house; long lanky legs, too short to keep the pendulous belly from the ground; and a long tapering snout of the most formidable dimensions, corresponding with the great, unsightly, slouching ears that conceal their little eyes stuck almost at their roots. These brutes are as ferocious to meet, and as disagreeable to look at, as any member of the family to which they belong; and when they elevate the tapir-like mane of strong bristles, with which they are plentifully..

provided all over the body, it is difficult to make oneself believe that they have been more than a few months removed from their native wilds.

They are much in want of a foreign alliance, and a proper amount of care in breeding to remedy the defective forms they have acquired, or retained. They lead degenerate lives everywhere here, nothing is done in the way of improving or ameliorating their condition, and assuredly their habits are, even for pigs, most degradedly filthy.

A good constitution they must possess, or else they never could sustain the harsh treatment and neglect they meet with during their lives. The starvation, worrying from competitive dogs, the kicks and blows of passengers, and the summers' meltings succeeded by the winters' freezings, have all to be undergone before the great angular spaces about their ribs have collected a little fat, and their huge bones have attracted a minimum proportion of muscle. The butcher then interposes, and puts an end to their miserable career.

There is no danger of their skins being inflamed and blistered by the sun, as we have seen those of some little nurslings at home, who had incautiously left their styes at midday when it was a little warm, and suffered for their indiscretion. The cuticle, besides being black, is as thick almost as that of the hippopotamus or rhinoceros, and rendered quite impregnable under their thicket of bristles to any assaults from the hot rays. In winter, nature has not forgotten them, for in addition to the coarse capillary covering, a thick undergrowth of fine hair grows close to the body, and acts the part of a hair shirt during the whole season: we have seen this even in the autumn.

I cannot forget the embarrassment and surprise into which a pig, that had been brought by a native to sell, threw a group of soldiers and sailors on the beach at Talien-whan Bay, as the troops were disembarking. It was a very

small one, and far from handsome. It lay in the sand with its legs thrust out in a state of trepidation at the strange and rather noisy crowd that knelt about it, quizzed it, and fingered its external organs unmercifully. For a minute or two I was rather perplexed with the novelty, but made out what it was at last. The majority of the spectators called it all kinds of odd and rather impressive names. One said it was a 'young hant-eater, the same wot he 'ad seen once t' at some unpronounceable place in South America. Another declared it was a sort of 'porkypine,' and brushing his hair the wrong way, referred to Johnny, the pig's guardian, if that was n't the way it went. Another declared it to be a rough-haired badger.

When told that it was a pig, and when a smart tap on its nose had elicited a squeal and a grunt, there was great laughing at the expense of the naturalists. One of them, however, had presence of mind enough to draw attention to the soft hair I have just mentioned. 'If that there hanimal wor a pig,' he observed, sagaciously, 'there could be no use sayin' "All cry and no wool," as the d—l said when he wor a shearin' the sow.'

Happy must be the lives of these rambling country grubbers, with gardens and fields to steal through now and then, where a sumptuous meal of fresh vegetables may give them a welcome change of diet, contrasted with the hard fate of their town congeners, who live from snout to mouth day after day without an opportunity of obtaining a morsel beyond the allotted quantity and quality found in the ditches, cesspools, and sinks of garbage and nastiness belonging to the public and private promenades of a town. Every street and corner has its due complement of these labourers scouring about for the public good, barking, grunting, snarling, and squealing the livelong day, and even going so far as to dispute the right of way through their beat, or their claim on the pickings to be cleared away, with the men who,

armed as they are with a long-handled three-pronged fork, and a creel behind their backs, gather from before the noses of their rivals the 'sordida rura,' the flowery symbols of a flowery land, strewn everywhere in wanton luxuriance.

How, in the name of Epicurus, the Chinese can eat such foul-feeding pigs is incomprehensible. I remember reading some years ago, in a book on China by a naval officer, something to the effect that a Chinaman will eat everything but his own father, and while highly amused at their going so far and stopping at that trifling obstacle, I was rather incredulous. Readily now would I endorse his statement, after only having seen them masticate with fond delight their beloved scavengers.

I was once taken to a street in Canton by a crafty young elf, where I was shown a shop, the window of which was hung round and across with cooked animals in sufficient abundance to prove that a good trade was not incompatible with a secluded situation. I was rather exultingly told that one lot of the nicely browned morsels was cat, and another opposite, split up and skewered with an eye to effect, was 'number one' dog.

I had not been many days in China before I vowed to abstain from sausages, pork chops, even roast legs, bodies, heads or tails, or any single fragment of the terribly unclean animal, so long as I remained in the country; and every day's experience has strengthened instead of weakened my resolution, until now I am become as rigid a pig-hater as Jew or Mussulman, though I see that the Chinese live and thrive on such flesh.

Towards dusk, when it was almost necessary to grope for the path, we fell amongst a drove of these brutes lying all about the banks and raised places, and to escape getting a tumble over some of them, we had almost planted our pony's feet on the body of the straw-coated driver, who rose up in alarm, and when he beheld us, stared as if about to scream.

His excitement calmed down at length, and he was able to tell us that there was an inn a few li ahead. He was going to sleep on the ground with his pigs until morning; no great hardship apparently for the hardy fellow.

The inn was like one of those establishments so often described in books of highway exploits as existing in the desolate places of England in the last century. It stood alone on a high bank, apart from a group of little houses. The latter looked up from the stagnant lakes of water encircling them like the heads of so many alligators. They formed the village of Yang-chow. Our hostel was a long low building, with a very low gateway to the courtyard, very small windows in front, and a narrow entrance to the visitors' portion of the house.

It was dark, yet there was noise enough for a riotous meeting of fake-away gentlemen, and there was also an impregnation of Samshu that tainted the air. It made the doubtful exterior seem more suspicious. In we must go, however, for we were saturated with water; while fatigue inadequately expressed the general aching we experienced, and our feet felt as if they were in poultices.

Ma-foo, muleteer, mules and ponies looked, as doubtless they were, done up for the day, and needing all the rest they could get to re-invigorate them for the morning. They had had a heavy day of it; indeed they must have thought it was never to terminate, while threading all manner of mystifying roundabouts, so they shouted and neighed until the landlord appeared with a train of waiters behind him. Joyfully surrendering the half-famished nags to the groom, we entered the house.

It consisted of one narrow dingy passage not less than fifty-seven feet in length, and far more like a robbers' cave, such as that described by Gil Blas, than a respectable resting-place for honest wayfarers. A large lamp, smoking and flaring, swung high up from the middle of the roof, and only

made the darkness at both ends more profound. But after a time our eyes got accustomed to the obscurity, and to the flickering light, and then it was partly possible to make out the dubious shelter to which our good fortune had guided us.

On each side of the long apartment stretched the usual mud and brick kangs covered with cane matting, on which reposed or squatted in all kinds of attitudes the nude figures of some forty or fifty travellers of a very humble degree in

The Inn of Yang-chow.

life, each with his journeying gear and his equipment safely packed up alongside of him, and his sword, matchlock, or lance within easy reach of his hand. A row of posts supporting the roof ran along the front of each couch, and on these hung saddles, bridles, and draught harness in orderly confusion, making the shade over the prostrate individuals more irregular and mysterious as they lay or reclined in twisted forms, their dark yellow skins showing anything but pleasant in the interrupted gloom that pervaded the place.

Fantastic piles of goods were huddled up among the rafters, while the earthen floor was encumbered with pack-saddles, panniers, and bags of grain.

At one end of the long shed was the kitchen in which moved the cook and his *aides*, busily engaged frizzling, frying, and stewing strong-smelling pork and stronger-smelling compounds fried in oil, with a sickly effluvium of garlic predominating. The evening was not very warm, yet the *chef* perspired and blew as he stirred, and tasted, and served out the odorous viands in little basins and bowls to the greasy urchins who were waiting to distribute them over the room.

This was not a very desirable performance to have under one's nose all night. Our host did not look the least put out of his way by the great *omnium gatherum* assembled under his roof, but flitted everywhere like a thorough man of business, with overwhelming suavity of manner for such an unpretending mansion. He carried us to the very opposite extremity from the cook-shop, and gratified us exceedingly by ushering us into two little rooms partitioned off from the main one, fitted with well-barred doors and windows, and tolerably clean. Into these first-class apartments the few things we had were carried, and gathered in a corner after the fashion of our fellow-guests, who were only separated from us by a very thin and fragile division of boards. When this was done came the cold water, then the tea, then dinner of the usual fare gladdened our eyes about nine P.M.; but during its preparation a most satisfactory change had taken place—our well-washed habiliments were flung aside, and replaced by a dry suit.

Scarcely ever was a hard bed so attractive, never came sleep so willingly, but many of the unthoughtful yellow-skins without had awakened from their first nap, gorged their paunches, and set to work to amuse themselves according to their wonted custom. Some smoked tobacco; others

played dominoes and cards, by the help of the faint light emitted from the saucer lamps; a few rattled dice out of a bowl within a few feet of us. Their earnest grunting voices sang out as each gambler dashed the cubes on the matting or a little stool, 'Hi yo le-o'—there is another lot of sixes. This medley disturbed our rest; and we sat a long time gazing out on the strange scene, and watching a sensual-looking young man indulging himself in the opium-pipe close to our door, regaling our sense of smell with the not disagreeable fumes of the burnt narcotic. He could not fail to see that his nocturnal orgie was the principal attraction in the room for the eyes of the strangers, though he proceeded to satisfy his craving for the drug with the greatest unconcern. Since we had entered the house, not an inmate of it appeared moved by sufficient curiosity to raise himself from his lair to visit us.

The opium-smoker lay with his face in our direction, his head raised a little by a wooden pillow, and his whole mind given up to the inhalation of the vapour, and replenishment of the bowl by small doses of the drug picked up and stuck on the pipe from time to time. As the quantity he had smoked began to act upon his system, his features kindled up from the solid composed state they had been in previously. After each instalment there was a longer interval, as if he wished to prolong the process; and he muttered away in a low tone to himself, while his black eyes sparkled vividly, and the heavings of his naked chest denoted increased breathing. Still he lay tranquilly in the same posture without any symptoms of uneasiness.

The prescribed quantity, to our gratification, was nearly expended. Once more he stretched out his strong muscular arm towards a little tray, on which were the implements employed to charge the 'smoking-pistol'—the long needle or wire with which the opium is lifted was again in requisition—the almost empty 'ka lan' or shell was hurriedly

scraped by it, and its contents, now changed from a treacly colour and consistency to that of a crumb of gingerbread, steadily carried to the 'yen-tau' or cup of the pipe, which bore a decided resemblance to a magnified gas-burner in shape, and in the small perforation in the centre of its top. The opium is placed on this little aperture, into which the needle is pushed to establish an opening between the interior of the vessel and the external air, then the skewer is thrown away, the open end of the 'yen-ti'—pipe-stem—is taken between the lips, the cup is carried down to the flame of the lamp, and the opium becomes faintly red as the deep inspirations of the now drowsy-looking man drew air and smoke into the lungs with a weak sputtering noise.

Suddenly it ceases; the pipe and the hand that held it drop together; the solitary carouse is over; the man of pleasure is overcome, and the object is attained, if not already passed by; for he lies so still that it would be difficult to believe that he was in anything but a profound trance or sleep, one so deep that the shouts and quarrels of those within a few inches of him fail to disturb the vision or rouse his stupefied senses.

He looked a sad strange figure in the foreground of that half-wild and novel tableau, stretched out on his back as if dead, the scarcely moving ribs testifying that he was not really so. The hand and the 'pistol' were still together where they had fallen, and the head resting on the stool showed the deep yellow features but imperfectly by the partial gleam of the half-extinguished lamp that stood near, illuminating but obscurely the corner where the victim reposed. It revealed the saddle and its load of effects laid up against the wall; the journeying wardrobe, wet and soiled, close to our partition; and the heavy odd-shaped sword within easy grasp of the nerveless hand; while the strong flaring blaze of the large lamp in the background threw marvellously weird-like lights and shadows through the long vista, and brought out

in grotesque relief the nude beings coiled up and laid out in sleep; the boisterous gamblers dressed and undressed, engrossed with their play, squatting or reclining in every conceivable way, as well as the miscellaneous agglomeration of all sorts of uncouth articles on beams, posts, and beds; all this gave one a vivid impression of a robbers' den, though the lingering aroma of the poppy's juice was rather out of place.

This was the first time I had seen the beginning and ending of an opium-smoker's orgie, and watched the gradual change throughout the whole of the stages, from excitement to stupefaction and somnolency. I was satisfied that it was a very quiet and unobtrusive way of getting dead drunk, however injurious it might be in the long run; and was productive of but little annoyance to the lookers-on.

At Singapore, at Hongkong, but more particularly at Tien-tsin, I had often peeped into the interiors of the opium-shops, fully prepared to meet with some of those fearful wrecks of humanity that rouse the sympathies and curdle the blood of our people at home, when described in pro-China speeches and books; but I beheld nothing more than what I have just described—in fact not so much, for the dens were seldom so agreeable as to be supportable for a period long enough to enable a visitor to see a votary take his allowance out—and everything, as orderly and peaceably as the most sober race of people could desire.

At Tien-tsin I made many enquiries, and haunted for some time a number of the shops in our vicinity, and gathered as much information as any stranger could well do under the circumstances. The number of the 'Yai-pian yan-pu' or opium-smoke shops then was about 300. These are places where opium can be purchased, seethed and prepared for immediate use, in small quantities, by people who use it in their own homes, and where it can be consumed on benches built up in the room usually set apart for that purpose in all these places. There are, besides, many wholesale establishments for the sale

of this article to the retail shops, but where it is not permitted to be used on the premises by customers.

The smoking-shops are generally in low, dirty, out-of-the-way streets and back alleys, and are kept concealed from view as much as may be compatible with the trade carried on in them. Ruinous hovels, regular dens, a degree or two more forbidding than our dram-shops in the 'slums' and lanes of large towns, and without sign-boards—for the vice, one would think, is tried to be kept a hidden one—'cribs' which would be passed without any suspicions as to their character by those who had not been told, are met with in every part of the Tien-tsin city and suburbs. You are threading your way through some sickening passage formed by gables and fronts, backs and corners of runagate and advancing houses, handkerchief to nose and mouth in one hand, and a strong stick for the benefit of the swarming curs in the other. You are exploring, looking out for novelty and adventure in any shape, but chiefly to study the manners and customs of the people. Every open door has had its share of your attention, every courtyard its scrutiny. Workshops have been entered, the mechanical operations criticised, and the salient characteristics noted. You leave, perhaps wiser, perhaps gratified; and continue your route with the usual disagreeables, until you come to a corner where a great round piece of brown paper clings to the wall, so like the colour of the wall itself, that you may have passed a dozen such without your eye catching their outline. You are on the trail; the scent is strong. You may be as certain of what is about the vicinity of that brown paper, as the North American Indian used to be when he saw a twig snapped from a bough, or a scrap of dress fixed on a thorny bush.

A 'howff' is near, and you search. There is no corresponding paper on any of the doors, and you penetrate farther into the maze, when you remember that a courtyard full of rubbish was passed, at the top of which stood a riddled

sort of bothy with the windows thickly patched with paper, and the door, well fitting, closed. You turn back, peep behind the courtyard gate, and discover another disc of whitey-brown.

Without any warning to those who may be inside, you advance to the door, and shove it boldly open. You will find a darkened room as soon as you close it behind you again, with a couple or so of tiny lamps burning in various places, making the darkness darker still, and reminding you of those lamps which superstition says are ever faintly gleaming in the old Roman sepulchres, and are only extinguished when these are opened to the light of day. You stand at the door-post for a minute or two, during which vision is slowly returning, and the proprietor or manager—though he would rather not see strangers enter his secluded abode—makes you welcome. Three or four dark masses are laid on the everlasting benches. They are labourers or some such members of a poor class taking their daily or afternoon dose, after the benefit of the morning one has passed off. Three have just begun, and the fourth is resigning himself to the dreamy sleep. That is all you can see; and you stay in the mixed flavoured dungeon for a few minutes, just to assure the landlord that you intended him a friendly visit.

The sight is a pitiable one—a sad one, but not so repulsive nor so heart-rending as that I once witnessed in what might be called a public-house on a summer's afternoon in Stamboul, where the opium-chewers were at work and going on like men possessed with demons, until they subsided into lumps of paralytic imbecility, fagging a year of nature in an hour; neither does it affect one half so much as the glare and the misery, the garish display and the ragged brutalised mob, the stir and commotion, the ribald and profane language, or the indecent quarrel and the savage bull-dog-like fight, that may, alas, too often be observed by the stranger who traverses our own land, and, who, at a distance—for we would advise

him not to enter—surveys the 'life' at the gin-palaces, the taverns, public-houses, dram-shops, and tap-rooms, decorated by their gay luminous show and superb fittings, to be found in all our great thoroughfares in manufacturing towns and cities, and providing plenty of occupation for the policeman, the jailer, and the hangman.

If opium-smoking is a great evil among the Chinese people —as it is, no doubt, yet they endeavour to hide it—they are ashamed of it—and it offends neither the eyes nor the hearing by obtrusive publicity. It is not made a parade of by night and by day; neither does it give rise to mad revels and murderous riots. Its effects on the health may be more prejudicial than our habits of alcohol-drinking, but yet it is hard to see any of these broken-down creatures that one reads about.

A strong opponent of opium-smoking, and a man who spoke the Chinese language thoroughly, took me to an opium-shop to see some of these examples, but the exhibition was what we should call a failure so far as the exposure of the unhealthy effects of the drug might be considered.

The room was filled with men of nearly all ages, and as robust-looking as the majority of their townsmen. They freely answered all questions, and the result was not particularly unfavourable to the reputation of the habit, compared with the number of lives sacrificed every year by the use of alcoholic liquors and the number of strong constitutions sapped by them in other countries.

We can recall to mind one old fellow, fifty-two years of age, who confessed that he indulged himself as often as he could afford it, which was always twice, often thrice a-day. His earnings daily were about two hundred and fifty cash as a coolie, and out of this he spent one hundred in opium. This man had taken it for twenty-two years, and left it off twice during that period—once voluntarily—when he was induced to begin it again at the instigation of his friends (?),

and the second time to allay the pangs of hunger after he had abstained from smoking for some months. Two boys—his sons—usually accompanied him, and remained in the shop while he was engaged with his pipe. How like the gin-shop family meetings!

On being asked why he smoked opium, he could not give any satisfactory answer; and his sensations, while under the effects of it, were vaguely described as strength imparted to him, and the production of happiness to a degree he could not find words to express. When he required opium he did not feel well, and experienced a sensation as if his breast was being torn open. If it were possible, he said that he would gladly abstain from it, though he feared he could not voluntarily do so; but if confined in a room for several days, and plenty of food allowed him, he supposed he could then do without the smoke.

Another of my friends, also an anti-smoker, used to select cases of infirm-looking Chinese in the streets as objects who were succumbing to the narcotic; but unfortunately for his judgement, the greater portion of these disavowed having anything to do with the drug, and gave positive reasons for their sickness. If an impartial observer were to go the rounds of the three kingdoms, and direct his attention to the effects of strong drink and the spectacles it affords, and then do the same in China—of course I speak of the North more particularly, as I have had more ample opportunities of investigating this matter there than in the South, with regard to the opium question—I can almost safely predict at what conclusion he would arrive.

One occasionally meets with pictures for sale in the streets, in which are caricatures of emaciated creatures with terrible eagerness clutching the pipe as they lie in a dilapidated house, their clothes in rags, and their toes protruding through their worn-out shoes. And in one of the temples at Tien-tsin, where the Buddhistic pandemonium was represented in all

its horrors, and the punishments to be awarded the transgressors of Fo's precepts pourtrayed by plastic models with an almost supernatural talent in devising infernal tortures, the opium-inhaler is there represented awaiting his doom; yet in spite of these illustrations the custom is on the increase. It is a hidden vice, but Chinamen will tell you that every shop ought to or does pay a secret tax—a 'squeeze'—to the mandarins, and that the latter are kept well informed as to the number of new openings which take place, consequent on the flourishing state of business in the drug that briefly cheers, but deeply enervates.

A slave to the narcotic is perfectly well aware of his danger, and the enormity of the offence he is committing against his family and relations—in starving the one, and disgracing the other—but he looks with fear and contempt on a drunken European who reels and tumbles about in the street, kicks up brawls, and sheds blood, and wonders why, if the foreigner is determined to get rid of his senses for a time, he does not do so pleasantly and peaceably, instead of acting like a wild beast.

There is little use in a missionary preaching to the Chinaman about his evil propensity, when the man can point to the preacher's countrymen and ask if the 'samshu' is not worse than the opium; and if you showed him a print of Cruikshanks' Bottle, he would tell you—and perhaps you wouldn't quite disagree with him—that opium could never produce such a tableau. It is a vexed subject, as is teetotalism to many people elsewhere, and, as Chinese gambling might be, if viewed in the same light.

Let us quit the midnight amusements of a strange inn, and bolting with some care the passage door, seek our room. Before consigning ourselves, however, to repose, with the clatter outside still strong in our ears, the expediency of inserting five bullets in each of our revolvers was not overlooked, and the Japanese chopper was placed in the most

advantageous position under M.'s pillow, ready for a half-asleep hack and thrust; for we reasoned that since the Chinese showed such a fancy for lethal weapons, and manifested so much prudence in their disposal at night, there could be surely no valid objections to our doing the same.

The house was an odd one, and quite out of the usual style we had as yet been accustomed to; the locality was not assuring, to say the least of it; and our fellow-guests were ten to one against us, should they turn out, as they undeniably appeared to be, rough and ready adventurers.

How futile it was, though, trying to keep awake! Despite all the banditti, highwaymen, robbers, and cut-throats—despite all imaginings of the little games the fleeced gamblers might be up to when they could play no longer; and in opposition to the thousands of mosquitos who did their best on the fresh rations they sung so lovingly over—with a bump at intervals from headstrong beetles who found their way in by the half-open window, and seemed anxious to share our bed—we forgot everything in the mysterious phenomena into which mind and body was gently drifted.

CHAPTER XV.

EARLY RISING IN CHINESE INNS — THE FERRY AT THE YANG-HÔ — THE TRAVELLED FLORIN — FLOODED ROADS — FEAR AND CURIOSITY — TRAVELLERS ON THE HIGHWAY — TUBERCLES OF THE WATER-LILY, AND ITS USES — ARROWWORT — A MARSHY REGION UNDER CULTIVATION — A CHINESE ALBINO.

LOUD thunder had been heard during the night, and never-ceasing flashes of lightning had glared over the room, without disturbing me; neither did the suspected ones in the hall of innocence and peace maraudingly drive us from our rest; but the rain, whisking and dropping with weary beat, was more effectual about five or six o'clock next morning, when all objects beyond the paper window looked cast down and carried a tearful expression about them, as they lay bathing and floating in the wet under an angry sky. A nice prospect, certainly!

The doors were released from their bolts, and a glance out at the long public room told nothing but that everybody had left long ago — even our vitiated opium-eater had rallied from his lethargic inebriation, and was off. The place where they had been, which looked so dramatic last night, was all but unrecognisable. It was as different as seeing the pit of a theatre when lighted up and crowded with a moving noisy audience, and viewing it again empty, dismal, and cold, in the starved daylight. There were the posts, the benches, the stools, and the wooden pillows; but all naked, bare, and dirty, with the black spider and scorpion-haunted beams above them, surrounded by mud-plastered walls, earthy, and not improved by some immoral illustrations — fit accompaniments to gambling and opium-smoking. The jailish-looking

windows levied a heavy tax on the light as it struggled to force its way through the blackened sheets of paper, and scarcely reached the unsightly hillocks on the unswept earthen floor.

The weather was vexatious, and the sun more so; but we were fain to be content and to wait the clearing up of the sky, which began about seven o'clock. Then we were ready to start, but not in the best humour exactly, as the Great Wall was yet a long day's journey from us, and it was to be reached before night. The bill was paid, the ponies saddled, and the luggage packed firmly in the cart, with the mules fidgetting to be on their way, when the grinning landlord, who expected to make sure of his paying customers for another day and night, obligingly broke the afflicting intelligence to us, in a straightforward way, that the Hô, or river, had risen to such a height that boats would be required before we could cross. We ascertained that we could entertain but faint hopes of transport for some hours.

Riding down to the foot of the steep bank on which the inn and the village stood, we found the Yang-hô foaming and tearing past us in a yellow flood, increased in dimensions from a fordable stream in fine weather to a torrent, through which it would have been folly to attempt to force our ponies.

But affairs did not look so desperate or hopeless as our host had represented them; for, at the other side and paddling about for hire, we discovered a washing-tub of a boat, moved and piloted by two men, who sculled across on our hailing them. How much would they ask to carry us to the opposite bank, with our baggage, and swim the ponies behind the skiff? A long deliberation ensued between the two men — in which all the villagers who had turned out busied themselves in giving an opinion. Their fare was only six thousand cash for the job — about thirteen shillings for ferrying us across a river no wider than the Peiho! They

seem determined to make their money while the stream is at the flood, and to take advantage of our haste to get away; but they must receive their lesson. We make an offer of one thousand cash — which, as all the current cash is now about the thickness and breadth of an old sixpence, and go two thousand to the dollar — is half a dollar. They would not listen to the proposal, but jumped into their boat again, wonderfully irate at the small value we set on their labours.

We mounted, and made as though to ride towards a deep ford, where a number of people were toiling in the bubbling water, immersed to their shoulders, with their clothes in a bundle on their heads. The elder Charon gave in; he could not suffer such generous souls to plunge and battle in the seething river when he could ferry them across, sure of gaining the thousand cash. He loudly shouted to us to come, and that he would be content with our offer.

The cart was emptied of its load, which, with the saddles, was put in the bottom of the boat, and then sent some way down the stream to get a place where it could pass in safety — we crouching down in the leaky craft to ballast it, while the ponies were swam across by naked Chinamen, who seemed accustomed to the work — they showed such tact — though it could not be very remunerative to such a number of strong fellows.

There were many pedestrians sitting and standing on the grassy bank when we got out of the impromptu barge, nearly all of whom were in the thatch coats, and appeared as if they had already been some hours on the road. Their astonishment at our presence was fairly eclipsed by that of our boatman, who almost screamed for joy, when, being rather scarce of the base and bulky coin of the country, we gave him a new florin. Such a silvery gleam had, perhaps, never before gladdened those unnaturally exposed eyeballs of his — much less had ever been in his possession as lawful

property. He ran off from the crowd with it stuck out in his open palm to admire it alone, but the excited fellows followed like a lot of rats after a piece of cheese, and gathered round him as if he had obtained a gift of the *elixir vitæ*, in which they desired to participate.

It seemed too good to be real, however; and to the surprise and delight of a few seconds before, succeeded suspicions and doubts as to its quality. The man came up to us again, weighing the coin in his fingers and testing its genuineness as well as he could, looking very business-like and very serious during the scrutiny, and, pointing to the obverse, wished to know what the Queen's head signified. The reply that the likeness was that of the grand lady who ruled the great English nation, though it caused some wonder, and perhaps a grin or two from some rustic wretch whose ideas of the estimation in which the sex ought to be held were not of a very exalted or noble kind, did not content the shrewd countryman until he believed that the cross on the reverse was Her Majesty's mark; then did he fully understand the importance of the bargain he had made, and the lucky windfall he had obtained by a few minutes' work.

The ominous weather had by this time vanished; the hills came out with their keen upper ridges only marred by misty exhalations from below; and the July sun shone down hot and strong from a sky unruffled by the thinnest cloudlet, sending the water lying everywhere about us in steaming vapours over the ground, until we were well-nigh suffocated and parboiled, in the bright hot light, with the moisture and perspiration.

The only tracks we saw having any pretensions to a high road were at every few yards regular lakes and dams of reeking rain-water, from which no cart could come unscathed, and through which it would have been fatal to our prospects to have urged the mules. The sole alternative, therefore, was still to cling to the north-east horizon, while

we sought lanes and paths through the millet and maize sweeps. We were often baffled, but always came to some little village. Rather poor they were, perhaps, at times; but the people looked healthy and happy. Here we found some part of the drowned main road, which gave us a clue to our position. The labourers in the gardens, or in the rows of grain, did not bustle or stir themselves much about our presence among them; and the passengers on the move—whom we were often obliged to brush against, as they made way for us in the contracted passages, where there was no ditch or bank to protect the crops, and where everyone was solicitous to avoid damaging them— unscared, just favoured us with a sly squint, as they strove to soothe their far more alarmed steeds, should they happen to be mounted. After proceeding for a bit, and before the opportunity could be lost, they would give us a little more of their attention, and cogitate on the extraordinary sight of two strange men — the likes of whom, in such a novel garb, had never been seen there before — moving through the country as if they had been in it all their lives, and were familiar with every inch of its perplexing mazes.

But two or three old worthies in the course of the day were not so courageous, and showed the unmistakable impulses of childish timidity or fear; for, catching a glimpse of us in time for a retreat, they hastily dismounted from the animals they bestrode, and, with the alacrity of a startled fawn, darted in among the thick screening jungle of stalks, dragging their 'mounts' with them, and were not seen again, being probably too much overpowered by the distant glance to try a nearer one.

Travellers were pretty numerous in some places, where the independent and circuitous thready ways converged on the lowland, nearly all of whom were equestrians, who rode well-conditioned ponies, or sleek, tall mules; and not a man of them but looked well fed and well clothed. The latter was,

if not a picturesque, a certainly very decent outfit of spotless-white homespun cotton, with long, wide thigh gaiters of silk, faultlessly-bleached socks in the black or blue shoes; the wearers' sonsy faces tantalised, hid, and fanned by the flapping yard of brim that spread out from the flat-topped straw hat, so tightly bound to their round heads by the tape across, and the tape below the chin.

There was also a sprinkling of those who in every country must always 'pad the hoof'—the less comfortable members of the peasant class who move about in search of employment, trudge to other localities on friendly visits, or plod to towns in the vicinity for the few necessaries they require. Straggling wheel-barrow men, who throw themselves in before us, with the straw face-shade tied over the brow by the useful tail; plying their weight and strength to the utmost between the shafts of their carriage; but what they conveyed was too well wrapped up by covers to allow anyone to guess it correctly. They had an arduous job propelling such heavy loads on the thin wheel in such muddy ground, but they went at it with such determination and goodwill that they kept away fatigue and despondency.

The crops have not varied in kind along the whole of our track from Tien-tsin; there is just as much diligence and regard to be remarked in reference to the sedulous application of the hoe or the plough in turning up the soil about the roots of the plants, the manner in which these are sown, and the non-existence of a bare spot where a seed-topped stem can wave. Here and there in certain places, the ground was broken a little into narrow, but deep, gullies, from which the water could not be drained; and in these grew in abundance the 'Lien wha'—the much-prized and sanctified lotus or water-lily—the *faba Ægyptica*, or Pythagorean bean, the symbol of creative power and fertility, continually represented in the images and pictures of the Buddhistic

religion. As in Egypt it was the emblem of fecundity, or power of the world from water; and, as it was consecrated to Isis and Osiris, so is it in China to Fô. As it is not in flower so far north until the end of July or beginning of August, it was not in perfection when we saw it; but even then it looked graceful and pretty, with its closed pink or carnation-and-green calyx, growing like that of the tulip before it blooms, and rising up from amid the great concave round leaves, so green and glossy after the genial rain, as they swim on the clear pools.

It can scarcely surprise anyone, who looks at these beautiful herbaceous plants, growing as they now do, with their gorgeous double flowers only in the bud, that such a people as the Chinese, as well as other eastern nations among whom Buddhism prevails, should entertain a preference for this above all other flowering plants. They accept it as a type of the most mysterious operations in Nature, and have assigned to it a prominent place in the Eden promised by Fô — whose image they place on a dais of lotus flowers — that land of supreme happiness, where his votaries are taught that there is but one sex, and that the masculine. The women admitted will be desexualised, and the bodies of those who have obeyed the precepts of this false religion, 'reproduced from the lotus, are to be pure and fragrant — their countenances fair and well formed — their hearts full of wisdom and without vexation.' It is there also where 'they dress not, and yet are not cold; they dress, and yet are not made hot; they eat not, and yet are not hungry; they eat, and yet are not satiated. They are without pain, irritation, and sickness, and become not old. They behold the lotus flowers and trees of gems delightfully waving, like the motion of a vast sheet of embroidered silk. On looking upwards, they see the firmament full of the "To-lo" flowers, falling in beautiful confusion like rain. The felicity of that kingdom may justly be called superlative, and the age of its

inhabitants without measure. This is the place called the Paradise of the West.'

But the Chinese, who seem ever striving to blend the beautiful or pretty with economy and utility, venerate the water-lily as much for the material service it renders them on earth in sustaining life, as for the part it plays in their popular creed; so that, while admiring it, dedicating its virtues to their highest spiritual creation, and lavishing florid encomiums on its beauty, they do not forget to cultivate it, and use it as an esteemed article of food. In the market-places of towns and villages in and about Tien-tsin, quantities of green capsules, shaped like the rose of a watering-can, or the head of a gun-rammer, are exposed for sale in August and September. This is the torus or ovary from the top of the stalk, containing the numerous seeds or nuts in cavities on its surface, which are said to be excellent when eaten raw, or after being boiled and preserved in syrup.

In March and April, and also in May, strange-looking rootstacks make their appearance on the stalls, of a white colour, and resembling somewhat three or four of those incomplete divisions of a large pork sausage, such as are sold in England. This is the root of the water-lily, and if one of the elongated tubercles be cut across, it will be found full of holes running lengthways like the strands of an electric cable. This is a most useful and healthy esculent, and is eaten in a variety of ways. Many of the country people prefer it raw, when it tastes not unlike a coarse chestnut or an uncooked potato; but it is best boiled, and furnishes a very nutritious meal, with the other trifling adjuncts of a humble dinner; tasting somewhat between a potato and a turnip, palatable enough for any hungry stranger. It is also salted, pickled in vinegar, and preserved in sugar; and where very plentiful, besides these methods, it is converted into flour, which, when mixed with a proportion

of sugar and baked into bread, the Chinese describe as first-rate.

These small ditches and pools of what would otherwise be lost ground, but which are so favourably situated for the growth of the nelembium, and also for a few yards here and there of the arrowwort (*Sagittæ folia*), the root of which is also eatable, but is not so pleasant as the other—would scarcely be worth noticing, did they not remind us that land above and land below water are alike seized upon and forced to yield their share of support to the people who so thickly crowd them. So skilfully and earnestly is a marsh or shallow fresh-water lake, which would be reckoned next to useless in other countries, hunted, fished, and gardened, that it would be difficult to pronounce with any degree of certainty which is most productive, or on which the inhabitants appeared to thrive best.

To the westward of Tien-tsin, and between that city, Peking, and Pauting-fu—the capital of the province—there is an extensive swampy marsh, in many places deep enough to be considered a lake, where a continual war is waged against the stubbornness and perversity of nature, and where what might fitly be called an irreclaimable morass is made not only habitable, but very pleasant, to multitudes of industrious people by the exercise of ingenuity and indomitable patience, such as would astonish the dwellers near the bogs of Ireland, the moors of Scotland, or the fens of England. Not only do the natives there supply the greater share of their own wants by their own handicraft and devices, but they can spare an abundance of their produce to towns in their vicinity; for they supply largely the markets with fish, vegetables, and wild fowl, in return for the commodities of the dry land.

To this great basin, which is only bounded by a high wide bank of earth that separates it from the Grand Canal and the low country to the south, and the higher land that rises

towards Peking and the mountains to the westward, I sailed in a river-boat from the Peiho in the month of March, with the intention of visiting the chief provincial city some eighty miles off, and though I found so many obstacles and difficulties as to be unable to reach that place in the limited time allowed, yet the strange and curious scenes, and the congenial pleasures of a sort of gondola life and similar novelties, gave me great satisfaction for five days, the remembrances of which one would be sorry to lose.

Passing up the 'Shang-see hô,' or upper western river—a small tributary of the Peiho—through a strip of country flat as Holland, and from which the river is banked in, a day's sail brought me to the region of wide waters, bulrush, and bindweed, where white sails were scudding on in every direction through myriads of occult clearings, like cotton sheets hung up to dry on a grassy plain. Here the silent highways were as clear as crystal, when compared with the Peiho's ochrey tint. So complicated did the various tracks appear, that in the middle of a beautiful sheet of translucent water, extending far beyond the horizon, there was a little house erected, with the names of the places to which they led, painted on its sides for the accommodation of day passengers, while those who sailed by night were guided by a beacon-light in a large paper lantern hoisted on a tall pole.

For the whole distance I went—which was some forty or fifty miles—the shallower waters were mapped out by weirs—Elizabethan mazes made of reeds artfully disposed. The fish were not only prevented from wandering up or down the rivers and streams, but were let into the narrow crooked passages, that gradually contracted until there was not room for them to turn, and they were conducted then at last into a circular space, a *cul-de-sac* or regular trap, so arranged that egress was impossible. The open streams and the deeper bottoms gave lots of occupation to the throng of net skiffs,

and to the fishing cormorants. There were numerous boats with rows of these birds perched in sable majesty on a framework over the gunwales—like plumes on a hearse—looking as serious as if they were cognisant of the great responsibility of their functions, and the benefits they confer on their employers.

Presently I came to villages, numerous and well-built, as thickly peopled as those we were now passing, gathered on mounds in the middle of the lagoon, and shaded from the sun by great willow-trees that flourished in an appropriate soil; surrounded by stacks of reeds and bulrushes. A variety of the latter was very common—the *Scirpus tuberosus*—the root of which is the edible water-chestnut; from the stalks were made those great boat-loads of mats I had often passed, and which appear to be the staple manufacture of the district. The people eat the roots, weave the stems, and make tinder of the seeds.

Near, was an odd little town, as old-fashioned as any I ever beheld, built on an earthen foundation that had been dragged up from the muddy depths. The name, at this moment, I have forgotten, for it is a difficult task to remember such names, but it signified that its beauty exceeded its fragrance, which is a vast deal to say for a Chinese town.

Here I saw the first and only Albino I have met in the land, in a dense sloping wall of heads that lined the banks of the town stream to obliteration on each side of the boat. For here the crowd made a little stone bridge fairly totter again, as I was the first European to visit the unfragrant Venice.

Poor little fellow, his chalk-white skin and flaxen hair made him so conspicuous in the crush, that I looked and looked again, and yet could not understand what the phenomenon was, until the impetuous crowd near him, watching my every movement of eye or limb, discovered

that I regarded him as a curiosity, as they themselves appeared to do. Quickly they carried or pushed him down towards us, almost close to the water's edge, all the while joking and making fun of the little unfortunate, whose reddish or pink eyes, and golden eyelashes, could ill bear the sunshine, or even the daylight.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIRD SLAUGHTERING — WATER FOWL — MASKED BATTERIES — GATHERING THE NELEMBIUM ROOT — FISHING — ROADSIDE SANCTUARIES — THE SEA — SANDHILLS — MIDDAY INN — FIRST PEEP OF THE GREAT WALL — VILLAGE URCHINS — 'NO TAILS' — A FEMALE EQUESTRIAN — THE GATHERING AT SHAN-HAI KWAN — AN INHOSPITABLE HOSTELRY — THE VALUE OF OUR PASSPORTS — SORRY QUARTERS.

NEAR this town we spent an entire day among the out-of-doors people, as it was better situated than other places we had sailed by, similarly located on muddy mounds. There were patches of wheat for home consumption; tolerably large rice fields, loved haunts of the snipe—made and in process of manufacture by scores of naked men who stole and scooped the slimy earth from below the water, and bound it with bundles of reeds, flags, or millet-stalk; there were good gardens admirably cultivated, and stocked with those vegetables and fruits that grow best in this almost tropical summer; and there were also good houses of brick, and fine healthy inmates to look at.

There was some sport going on—for away at least a mile or two the dull booming of heavy firearms was incessant, as if an active engagement was being fought; so to observe it better, if not to share in it, we had to hire a small shallop, poled by a rusty-moustached old man who knew the country well, like an old huntsman, and who could make his rounds to the easiest fences of reeds or rushes, and by a dexterous push and a jerk of the skiff, clear them cleverly. We were amazed.

Every foot of swamp was converted into something or another more mysterious, more fantastic, and more unmean-

ing, as we went on poling and paddling over all kinds of infernal machines and comical contrivances reared up from the water, lying in the water, or fixed in the weedy bottom. But the burning of gunpowder in the distance was too enticing and too indicative of potent amusement for us to linger long among these plots and puzzles, which we left for the afternoon's solution, to afford us more surprise and more food for curiosity and investigation after we had reached the shooting 'ground.'

Flocks of bald cootes, dab-chicks, water hens, and other waders, swimmers, and divers innumerable, as if there had been an ordained muster of the families of the Orders Grallæ and Anseres; with — treasures to the eyes of the sportsman—scores of the mathematically flying birds winged rapidly over our heads in lines and angles; duck, teal, widgeon, and even geese hurried on or settled cunningly in places where they could not be disturbed without a timely alarm. Vainly we tried to outflank them, or creep along through the weeds — lying close down with only the boatman's arms exposed above the sides of the coracle: in vain we tried long shots, too long to be effective, for they whirred and flapped their wings away to some more secure retreat, leaving us to follow if we thought fit.

The only birds we could deceive and kill were the cootes and dab-chicks, and a few specimens of the grebe, one of which was very like, though about half the size of the tippet grebe, the gannet of Lincolnshire; and we ungallantly made war on them with excitement enough. Our competitors, the Chinese, who all this time have been blazing away for miles, and scarcely permitting the birds to rest for a minute anywhere, have not been so unsuccessful, but have beaten us into shame with their clumsy unsightly weapons, notwithstanding our quick loading and double barrels, at least two centuries ahead of the matchlock. So well had they studied the habits of the game, and so craftily had they masked

their presence and laid their plans, that they were circumvented and shot before they knew that murderous man was within a mile of them.

Let us skim over quietly to that intent fowler, who, with a frame like a Hercules, a skin naked as that of a scalded pig, and broiled black as that of a Hottentot from daily exposure to the heat, is squatted in his low light punt hastily loading for another addition to the pile of slaughtered birds heaped up in a corner. He does no more than give you a good-natured smile as he pours out the cakey powder from a leathern bottle-shaped flask, into a bamboo measure that serves also as a stopper to the precious receptacle, and then drops it into the muzzle of one of the two very large matchlocks. It might be truly called a full charge. Then without minding your presence at all, he lifts a great handfull of cast-iron shot of as many sizes as the metal may have chosen to assume when dropped at random into cold water, and, ignorant of the benefit of a wadding, trickles them down the thick barrel where they lie heavily on the powder.

The same form is gone through with the other, and then they are firmly lashed fore and aft on the punt—one horizontal to send its contents over the surface of the water, and the other slightly elevated to sweep the air some feet higher. Pole round his vessel. The bows and a portion of the sides are so hidden by carelessly-tied bundles of reeds or straw, that at a few feet you would think it a little heap of dead vegetation, and rather tempting to the birds than otherwise: in fact it is a masked battery done to perfection, and exhibiting far more knowledge of bird nature, than did those who inserted painted gun muzzles in the wall towers of Peking, of western human nature.

A low loose screen of rushes stands in front, through which the ends of the barrels protrude, and an apparently accidental sort of a hole is made about the middle of it for the use of the sportsman, or rather tradesman, who is now all

ready for any large collection of birds; but it must be a large congregation, for it would not pay to spend so much shot over a few, and the Chinese are not capricious or fastidious in their tastes, and will eat a coote with, perhaps, as much gusto as they would a teal or a widgeon.

He has not long to wait where such swarms abound, for he sees in an open piece of water in the centre of sedges and young rushes, a group of natatorials darkening the surface and floating suspiciously about.

'How'—good, he mutters, as he jumps out behind the punt, and sinks to his shoulders in the tepid liquid, standing in which he takes the flint, steel, and tinder from a small bag at hand in the boat, strikes a light, ignites the end of the coil of the twisted slow match that is fixed in the split of the springless hammer, and coiled round the short curved stock. Then with an anxious look at you, as much as to say, 'Please remain where you are, and let me follow my trade when I get an opportunity,' he walks or swims away, noiselessly and stealthily pushing on his gunboat, with his head scarcely above water, until he has got within twenty or twenty-five yards of the beguiled fowls, when a thumping bang scatters the shot among them like a hail shower, and sends about half a dozen flutterers struggling about, and nearly as many lying immovable on the smooth face of the pool.

Another bang in rapid succession to the first, and those who were flying away terrified are sadly pelted, some four of them descending lifeless to the spot they had just quitted. This is a wholesale butcher, but he sells cheaply the results of a day's work, and must do the best he can.

Where reeds are growing any height above the water, there is another kind of tradesman who pursues a mild business with as much skill as the other. Kneeling down in a small flat, with a light but very long gun, and peeping through a minute division in a screen of straw hung in front, this humble adventurer poles himself along after a crowd of

decoy ducks which he feeds from time to time. As soon as he hears the slightest sounds, or sees the wild fowl within range, he selects the best situation whence he can do the most damage; then he moves like a cat after a mouse, an inch at a time, and, lighting his match, fires his fusil from the hip, when a cloud of small iron pellets and baked millet-seed is hurled into the game. He seldom misses, though he does not take good aim, for he judges the distance so exactly that the bird or birds are in the centre of the discharge.

Gathering the Root of the Water-lily.

But what strange animals are those struggling or manœuvring in such a remarkable way? the stranger is likely to ask, as dark-coloured bodies go bobbing up and down in the largest open space, looking like nothing you have seen on earth, sea, or lake, either of fish, flesh, or fowl. Your boatman propels you, according to instructions, right in among them, and you are astonished to find that they are

men, seemingly making awkward attempts at escape from some monster of the water, which has seized on their legs.

A glance at the floating tray of reeds at once relieves you: these nondescripts are gathering up the roots of the water-lily, and many of them have their trays nearly full of them. They are strangely dressed for their work, and have a very uncouth appearance, with nothing but their dark brown faces to be seen, and their heads wrapped up in a blue turban to prevent their brains being thoroughly baked by the March sun. Around each of their necks is a wide circular collar of the same shape, and about the same size, as the ordinary life-buoy, and almost as light. To this is attached a waterproof bag of sheepskins with the wool off, about one half as long again as their bodies, in which they live and move many hours every day, as dry as if they were on dry land. To this buoy, which keeps open the mouth of the sack, and admits the air around the body without allowing the water to enter, is fastened the raft on which the day's store is carried.

There go the amphibious labourers, jumping and sinking, moving to one side and then to another, sometimes disappearing altogether below the floating ring, which then looks like the entrance to a pit or well, as they scrape and rub off the mud by their toes, in the corners of the bag, from each segment of the root which runs along in the tenacious bottom; and then, having exhumed the hidden treasure, all but an obstinate bundle of fibres that grow at the end, and retain a firm hold of their native earth, the operation is soon finished. One of the hands holds, with the side of the bag between, a pole armed with a hook. This divides or tears away the fibrillæ; the precious esculent is liberated and quickly transferred to the depository, and another is attacked.

This is, we were told, the great nelembium-growing country; and, to judge by the number of men burrowing

and floundering, and the quantity of these roots they can scrape up in a few hours, the acres of flowers cultivated must be very large. In no place where they grow did the depth exceed six feet. When covered with full flowers, the Chinese described the appearance of this wide lagoon as something magnificent — like a great carpet of red, white, and yellow or pink gems, that diffused a delicious fragrance for miles around. One of these Tritons gave us a freshly excavated tubercle, and nothing but tea could have been more refreshing in the prevailing heat and steam.

We remained a considerable time watching them, and then betook ourselves to the fishermen, where we were amused for as long a period in looking at their efforts to secure the carp and eels that breed and thrive in the marsh, and for whose capture every possible device is had recourse to. Small hillocks and long banks of straw are thrown up all over the country. In these the fish take refuge, and about them boatmen hover, spearing, netting, and trapping the finny fugitives they have just started out with long sticks. Nets are contrived in all sorts of shapes to drop down on the confused fish. Conical baskets, open at both ends, are expertly launched over them, and the captives are taken out alive with the net or the hand by the top, and put in a tub of water for the Tien-tsin epicures. Reed baskets, about two and a half feet long, in form like an hour-glass, and open at both ends by the reeds being bent inwards, leaving only a small tapering aperture for the fish to enter by, something like a wire mouse-trap, are strewn everywhere over the bottom, waiting for the entrance of some old carp who soon will discover that getting out is a much more difficult matter.

Old men continually thrust hand nets into the mud; baskets of all shapes and sizes are planted wherever a fish may venture; weirs, the jagged tops of which can be seen, like white spikes, pierce the water far and near. These plans, such as only Chinamen could suggest and act on for

the preservation of their species, filled us with a high sense of Chinese thrift and ingenuity.

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Towards midday we got up high on the hill-sides again, where the soil began to get light and scanty; and masses of granite, with thick veins of quartz, and jags of blue limestone, impeded our progress a good deal. The country around us was not very attractive, and looked as bare and sterile as some of the mining or pottery districts of Staffordshire.

The hamlets assumed the dimensions of little towns; the roads became wider and more traffic-worn; the roadside inns, though very rough and untidy, had more of a business air about them, and occurred at every half a mile or so, with their signs of hoops and scoops dangling on the opposite side of the way; but the usual temples, built on the choicest spots and of the best materials, were not now to be seen.

Either the people were too poor to maintain the trains of idle priests who loiter about these comfortable institutions, or are too wise to tolerate them; and instead thereof, in the outskirts of every little town or village, we saw diminutive toys set up, something in the temple style, in the most sequestered nooks, and under the oldest and widest spreading willows, with the tiny censer standing in the dwarfish doorway—which is placarded on both sides with inscriptions; and the great old bell, roughened by devices and figures, suspended from the limb of a tree to call Joss's attention to the stereotyped prayers, prostrations, and reiterations, as well as incense burnings, of the rustic devotees.

Some of these altars displayed a good deal of taste and care, and, besides being situated in the best places, where the villagers went to smoke and rest in the hot afternoons, were neatly decorated and painted. Two we observed with the ends made of sandstone slabs, marked by black wavy lines, like a water ripple—probably brought from near some coal

bed — traces of this mineral being apparent in the beds of the streams running from the hills, of the blocks of which the foundations of the houses are built, and in the half-burnt stones lying near the doors.

Here and there we pick up pieces of iron clay-slate on the path, and sometimes pass between banks, red as blood

The Roadside Sanctuary.

almost, from ferruginous impregnation. The crops are weak and thin, and more space appears to be given up to pasturage than millet growing. One advantage of sowing light-stemmed cereals between alternate ridges of the strong-stalked millet, is witnessed in the undamaged condition of

the former, notwithstanding the beating-down showers and heavy gusts of yesterday, owing, no doubt, to the support and protection they received from the lofty tough screens on each side.

As we descended again from the heights, we discerned the rusty outlines of a series of sandhills, which we knew must be near the sea; and about an hour afterwards we heard its sullen roar thundering over the sandy beach, as if it bid us once more welcome after our long absence.

I know not whether the pleasing sensations I then experienced quite equalled those felt as we drew near the mountains the second day after our departure from Tien-tsin, for they were of such a joyful nature on both occasions that I am not certain which gladdened me most — the hoary hills in the distance — so very like the Grampians — or the surging waters of the Gulf of Liatung, still lashing and writhing about after the storm in a grand fury, and madly hurling tons of sand per minute up on the shingly shore. M—— declares that he was certain he heard the low murmur of the waves between the awfully loud peals of thunder during the night in that curious inn; but such a declaration does not lessen our admiration now. We dismounted to let our angular-sided quadrupeds, on whose backs we had hitherto stuck as tenaciously as did the Old Man of the Mountain to Sinbad's, share in our joy, while we stood exultingly

> 'Watching the waves with all their white crests dancing,
> Come, like thick-plum'd squadrons to the shore
> Gallantly bounding;'

faintly trying to realise the raptures of any one individual in the van of Xenophon's Ten Thousand Greeks, on that day when the summit of the Sacred Mountain was attained; when the enemy's country had been traversed, and the Persians — with the redoubtable Tissaphernes at their head —out-marched; when the piercing winds and deep snows of

Armenia were left behind, with the barbarians who harassed them by night and by day; and the deep-blue waters of the Euxine lay slumbering beneath, and Greek towns, with open doors, were ready to receive them, after toiling over many hopeless parasangs and overcoming innumerable difficulties.

We did not shout, but never felt so much inclined to do so. The memorable cry of 'the sea! the sea!' seemed to ring in clear peals over the shore as we listened to the stern breakers crashing inland.

We mounted again after the first burst of welcome had been got over, and rode down towards the sandhills or dunes, through fine yellow sand, with, at intervals, a point of hard rock throwing itself in the way. Nearly everything was sand and shingle. Few trees grew within two miles of volcano-shaped, ever-changing, grit hills, and vegetation dared not linger where it would be buried many feet from the air and light, when the next storm that blew up the gulf carried tons and tons of seawater and dusty sand far over it. The highest of these dunes, standing about a mile from the sea, did not rise more than forty or fifty feet above the level of the beach; and while those in front, facing the gulf, were more generally detached from each other, those on the land side were in almost continuous ridges, running nearly north-east of the coast line. Though the northernly gales of winter may —nay must—add to the height and volume of these shifting barriers, and carry the materials of which they are composed far inland, yet as they don't seem to encroach further on the shore, and we could see no traces of seareed to bind the particles into a firm mass, we presumed that the fierce winds of summer sweeping down from the mountains threw the sea's discharged burden back again to the waters, and with it a vast quantity of sand from the plain.

A little shieling of millet-stalks stood far out, almost among the heavy rollers, and we could notice a few men, fishermen,

probably, doing something to their boats, which may have been damaged in the foul weather of last night and yesterday. Three or four miles farther on, we passed within two miles of a high point jutting out into the gulf, on which stood a temple and a few houses, looking very forlorn, though the sun gleamed brightly on them.

We were informed, on good authority, that in the old Chinese maps this little peninsula is marked as an island, and that the land has been gaining gradually on the sea all along the coast, a fact of which we had abundant proof before our journey was concluded.

Proceeding onward we cross one or two trifling streams, and thread through a boggy swamp, until we halt to breakfast at a large inn flanking an ancient village. It was a new erection, on a, to us, new principle, profusely done up in paint, and with many fringed triangular flags hung on the roof, in token, I suppose, of the happy termination of the builder's contract. A long building of the unchangeable blue brick, the plaster lines of which, between each layer, were agreeably whitened, while along the entire front a series of wide open windows, to be closed when needed by black shutters, made the place appear cool and airy beyond any houses we had seen before. The interior had the whole of one side snugly fitted up into neat little rooms, the small doors of which opened into the public hall. We supposed the other side to be arranged in the same manner from the number of tables and stools ranged along the earthen floor. The place looked secluded and cosy.

There was a little, quite a little, fuss when we entered, and the inmates scarcely knew what to do for a few minutes —whether to run for it by the back-door, or to yield to their fate. They soon recovered from their bewilderment, and did their best to satisfy our hunger, by boiling and steaming whatever could be found in the caldrons and stewpans that stood in the brick furnaces in the middle of the long room.

Our small quarter in a miniature quadrangle of the place was not to be despised, for the woodwork was clean and new, the window was as wide as one side of the apartment, and the 'kang' on which it looked was covered with freshly woven reed matting. Besides, there was the seabreeze, healthful and strengthening, smelling strongly of iodine, salt, bromine, and those other chemical elements that impart such a bitter and brackish taste to the air which was rolling in delicious zephyrs about us, making amends for the bad water they gave us to drink.

A travelling breakfast, half-an-hour's winks, with no one to rouse us, and we were in the saddle again, greatly to the disappointment of the poor people, who had deserted their homes and occupations for a peep; and scarcely got the opportunity before we were out of their sight.

The barren land was got rid of; trees, and gardens, and houses lined the road; and for the first and only time, in the light soil of a field of maize, we saw the plough—that primitive wooden implement of Chinese husbandry, constructed by the traditional Shin-nong, the second Chinese emperor, some two and a half thousand years before the Christian era—and probably as simple and rude as he left it —with the beam and single handle or shaft, the wooden share, and the narrow, nearly horizontal light iron coulter, that performs the functions of a mould as well as making a scratchy furrow but a few inches deep. It was drawn by a man at the end of the beam, the ploughman putting his shoulder to the perpendicular bar placed for that purpose, besides guiding the direction of the machine. Surely this is the reverse of ploughing by steam,—the very earliest effort of the human mind to abridge Agrarian toil.

We were about seven or eight miles from the hills, which now began to circle round before us, as if making towards the coast instead of proceeding parallel to it. Shan-hai Kwan, the town or fort in or at the Great Wall, was only

six miles off, we were told, and yet we could distinguish nothing of the world-famed barrier whose wonders have been sounded for centuries in the West; though, full of expectancy and eagerness, our eyes were strained to the very utmost in scanning the mountain-tops and sides, each of us fully bent on obtaining the first view.

Not a peak, pinnacle, or point presented the slightest hopes of being capable of transformation, by the most ardent observer or searcher, into a tower; and not a rift, an exposed line of granite, or natural escarpment on their sides could honestly be pronounced a wall built by the hands of man. Were we mistaken? had we come the wrong way? or, did the structure exist at all here? I felt inclined to ask, as we were passing through a village, and just clearing a clump of trees that grew near the village sanctuary. Another look in front made me aware of a long steep ridge ascending from the plain to the higher acclivities, and, near its upper edge, what might have been a long twisted streak in the side of a sandstone hill, otherwise covered with dark vegetation. It looked tolerably like the stone fences one often sees on hill-tops and sides in the highlands of Scotland or England, for dividing lands or enclosing cattle or sheep. Could this be the object so anxiously looked forward to? We were dubious, in truth somewhat desponding. Suddenly, on the border of the ridge, in clear relief against the intensely blue sky, a little square tower started out from the dark-grey background of granite, as if it had been a sentry-box for some lonely watcher on the heights; then another shred of brown line crept up to meet it, and down to join the piece we had first seen, and this curved gently towards the lower earth, hiding itself at last behind the trees and houses that intervened.

There could be no hesitation now in consoling ourselves for the suspense we had endured. The old frontier of Serica had been gained, and its ancient line of demarcation and

defence — a mighty work of human industry — stood above us with its twenty centuries of byegone years lying apparently lightly upon it, as it mounted with unbroken and flexible outline the irregular ascent. It was impossible to resist the enthusiastic impulses that gathered thickly in my breast. To meet my old and genial friend, the sea, once more, and to make the acquaintanceship of one of the world's greatest and, perhaps, most distant wonders all in one day, was a compensation I could never have anticipated a week ago. M—— was not behind in submitting to the blissful agitation of mind inseparable from such an occasion:—

> 'Joy had the like conception in our eyes,
> And, at that instant, like a babe sprung up.'

Another large village was entered, with a very wide level road passing through; and the houses, good sized and of brick, were standing on banks on each side. The inmates, male and female, were sitting under the trees or at their doors smoking the afternoon calamut, which they hastily dropped to run to the nearest and most convenient spots where they might stare at us, calling loudly to those within to hurry out and look at the strange men. Of course, uncontrollable curiosity was the predominant characteristic of all their sayings and doings. Exclamations and low whisperings of astonishment were in every corner. All was wonderful about us; all was incomprehensible on which they rested their vision.

In common courtesy we were bound to indulge them, and were pleased to observe that the ladies stood the test of our approach with the greatest *nonchalance*, sometimes merging into good-natured nods and bland smiles from their not at all disagreeable little faces. Those who had been rather slow or late in coming out made the most marvellous attempts to overtake our party with their Pandean feet.

O those village urchins! those breeched, tailed, and

jacketed sprouts of manhood, figments of humanity, molecules of mischief and uproarious riot, whose smallest ration of existence seemed tainted with the largest adulteration of jocular precocity and playful annoyance! They buzzed about us like hives of bees, tiring us out a thousand times more by their importunities, remarks, shouts, and bodily obstructions than all our other ordeals of travel. They were the first to notice and attack us, the nimblest to follow on our track, to outflank us, to form a howling vanguard as we entered a town, and a yelling rearguard when quitting it; and were in full force here. What aggravated the case, the old and adult population were certain to lend them their countenance and applause, when they made any laughable remarks.

We bore it all with the fortitude of martyrs, not quite oblivious to the fact that we were once young ourselves, and would have madly entered the ranks of any mob to hoot and cry, did two North American Indians chance to patrole the streets of our boyhood's city in their war paint; but we made a point of never encouraging them in their hobgoblinish freaks by speaking or sharing in their merriment. Nevertheless, the most austere individual must have shaken the reefs out of his sides with mirth, had he heard the ringing peals of derisive laughter that broke out from these small fry, re-echoed by the parents on the banks, when I removed my turban to dry the perspiration, that never ceased rolling down forehead and face. One of the ringleaders caught a sight of my short-cropped hair, and bawled out, in his most humorous vein—'Look! look, ha, ha! The funny stranger has got no tail, he has got no tail!' and he tumbled and jumped like a mad elf.

About a mile beyond this hornet's nest we met a fair damsel, astride upon a donkey, led by a youth about twelve years of age who might either be son or brother to the gentle creature. She was masked by the disgusting paint that glares out everywhere on the faces of these women, though

their necks may have been innocent of water for months, and as filthy as a beggar's. There was a most imposing get-up of the hair, in another style to any we had seen; a round ball on the top, shoe-horn behind, and wings on each side, with long silver transverse skewers sticking out about a foot

A Lady on Donkey-back.

from her head, and terminated by a button of red silk, and one or two little pennons waving behind. Enclosed in the capacious blue silk pelisse, no more of her could be seen than the lower part of her pink trousers, and the stumpy embroidered shoes, scarcely touching the stirrups.

The path was not a wide one, so we had to draw near each other in order to pass; but she never gave any external token of alarm, and faced us with an unmoved countenance, which she maintained until we had passed, though her sloe-black eyes,—dull beads compared to those at Lanchow,—were skimming busily over us the whole time. A very exaggerated specimen of the masculine gender, who may have been

husband or cicisbeo to the smooth-featured equestrian, walked after her with a ponderous lance, and looked rather jealous when we turned round to see how this mixture of filth and finery appeared from behind.

The highway widened suddenly into a level plain covered with broken stones and pebbles to a very inconvenient degree, and with but few houses to mar the view for two or three miles. On this the public road from Peking through Yung-ping opened to our left, and to our front we beheld what seemed an immense battlemented wall stretching from that on the elevated ground far away towards the sea, with some four towers quite new, the middle as massive looking and standing nearly as high and grand as those of Peking. A little farther on, and we came to an inn on somewhat of a grand scale, into the courtyard of which our gyp led the way. The small rooms on two sides of the quadrangle were externally clean and tidy, and the open doors were furnished with cane screens, that gave one a promise of fresh air and a cool bedroom. The yard itself was not very sweet in its trodden and unswept surface, but the numberless wooden troughs that almost filled it showed that it had often many occupants.

The landlord came out and civilly saluted us, and Ma-foo had even gone so far as to engage a room for our reception, when we were told that the town at the Wall was still four miles a-head; and as we considered it expedient to spend as much of our limited time as could be spared nearer that structure, we could not stay here, so thanked the disappointed proprietor for his politeness, and left. Afterwards, we regretted that we had not remained.

Our approach to the square bastions indicated the town of Shan-hai-Kwan. On the new map of the north-east provinces of China this town is named Ning-hai, but here it was only known by this name. We were much retarded by loose stones, and sunset was drawing near; after which we knew

that all communication with the place would be suspended by the closing of the gates.

On an upland near the foot of the hills, in the enclosure of an earthen bank, was a vacant camp of about a mile in length, composed of huts in rows and blocks, not unlike those of Aldershot, but perhaps more comfortable, because built of stone and mud. The strange feature of this plain was its stillness. Scarcely a creature was to be seen stirring for miles around, and there was this large and important city close by, as hushed and lifeless without its gates as if the people had all been dead, or hunted away by some fearful plague. There was the wall of ages, too, looking as old-fashioned, dreary, and obsolete as if it was standing ruinous in the valley of Mesopotamia, sole witness of the old world that had passed from before it like a shadow. Confronted by this venerable edifice in such a lonesome situation, it was impossible not to feel a tumult of indescribable sensations crowding in one's mind as we slowly approached its antiquated precincts, and I made a profound salaam to a monument that had survived the troubles and turmoils of barbarism and primeval civilisation, the rattling storms and tempests, arctic and antarctic extremes of temperature, changes of dynasties, and the ever transforming and demolishing fingers of Time.

We encountered nothing, with the exception of a row of open-fronted houses like inns, and a temple in ruins that stood in the way, and was inhabited by a single priest, ragged and dirty as any mendicant, of whom we enquired the easiest road to the gate. About sunset we crossed a fordable stream, the Shih-hô, or Stony river, on whose banks lay some rotting flats, deprived of occupation by the shallowness and rocky nature of the noisy foaming torrent. We were then close to a newly-raised plaster-work intended for defence, and spreading out in a wide semicircle to the city wall. Creeping through the constricted wooden gateway, we were once more launched into the Augean streets of a foul suburb, through

which we waded and sprawled, until M., who was riding the freshest pony, apprehensive of the gates being closed, hurried on in front with Ma-foo as interpreter, leaving me to bring on the half-foundered cart as best I could, and run the gauntlet in slow time of hundreds of people, who assembled on every available dry spot (they were scarce), and on the roofs of the houses, to look at the far-travelled strangers.

We profited by the exertions of a waggish Chinaman in a broad-leaved straw hat, who bestrode a jackass that was endowed with the faculty of tossing its rider over its ears whenever it had a mind to get rid of him. This man, by his good humour, had so far ingratiated himself into our groom's favour as to elicit all the necessary information about us. We soon had an audience increasing in numbers like a pack of jackalls round a piece of carrion, as he went in front trumpeting out, in his sonorous voice, 'Ta ying-kwoh li,' 'the great English nation comes'—a most unpardonable, as it was a most arrant exaggeration, to which, however, his hearers did not subscribe any great degree of credit or even attention, so wrapt up were they in the contemplation of the solitary and dusty 'English nation,' carried on the back of a tired pony through their unmerciful streets.

The suburb was only about half a mile in width, yet, before I had got half way through it, the thoroughfare that looked so vacant and dull but a few minutes before, was a moving causeway of animation and tumult. Like an old Highland pibroch or gathering, the movement was at first slow and distinct. A family would start out from a door here, another would sally out from a door there; a little shop ejected both owner and customers; a store would send forth a swarm of coolies, proprietor, and proprietor's sons. The buzz and commotion gradually increased as the movement quickened—doors opened everywhere—lanes and passages vomited crowds of crushing individuals; old and young hurry on faster and faster; decrepit old men, with a degree

of agility which must be not only unusual but unnatural to their physical condition, take extraordinary flying leaps across the puddles that separate them from us; the young and middle-aged race through them as if mad, or like the swine of Gergesenes, possessed of evil spirits, who would eventually drown them in their own ditches.

Away they tear, their tails behind,

'Like streamers flying in the wind,'

unheeding alike the mud, the tumbles, jostles, and tramplings, but forcing, squeezing, crushing, and urging on their way in the most ridiculous and outrageous manner, as the sounds of the said pibroch when it has gained its most vivacious prestissimo of commingling notes. Scouts flew in advance, like bearers of the fiery cross, who roused the sober tenants to the utmost verge of wonderment and excitability by their inflaming tidings, and gave the crippled, the old and young, the maids and matrons, an opportunity of contributing to the press and clamour, and the pestilential youngsters full time to brace themselves for the row and riot. So much 'bobbery,' so much rushing to and fro, perfectly upset me in the speedily-darkening *mêlée*, in which I was struggling to shake myself free; and had not the city gate been reached, and had I not perceived M. standing there to guide me through, I almost think I should have missed the way.

Fortunately, he had arrived just as the massive leaves of the gate were being closed, and contrived to get them kept open for me; and with as many of the rout and rabble as could force their active bodies through, I passed into the town. Under such circumstances, to examine the quality or extent of the place might well be put at the head of a list of impossible things. Our determination to overleap the banks, walls, and seas of heads, and obtain as much information as could be gained in a four-miles-an-hour pace through deviously tracked streets, was completely baulked.

We could only notice that the western gate, by which we entered, was like all other gates of Chinese towns we have seen here, in being double—the one at an angle to the other. This was done, the Tien-tsin lower orders say, because, besides being more difficult for the assault of a temporal enemy, this disposition of the entrances affords a far more safe and certain protection from the wily and subtle efforts of the fire-devil to effect an ingress, as his course is so straight, or his body is so unwieldy, that the sudden bend frustrates his incendiary propensities towards the interior economy of walled cities, as witches were imagined to be unable to cross a running stream in the superstitious days of England and Scotland. Thus are the houses guaranteed against fire by an insurance, that, to say the least of it, costs little beyond the faith necessary to rely on its efficacy.

This being one of the chief entrances to the 'Hill Sea Barrier,' as the title of the town implies, as well as one of the principal points of exit towards Old China from Mantchuria, it is strong and well cared for, being in height and width little inferior to the gates of the Chinese capital, and having on its summit one of those enormous ark-like structures that gives them such a massive appearance, with tiers of closely-set embrasures blocked by shutters with painted gun muzzles looking out on the passengers below.

The outer gate faced to the east, and a wretchedly smashed-up stone pavement, apparently of granite slabs, filled up the short space that led from it to the inner or western one. The houses and shops were old-looking, and all single-storied, and, as they had begun to light up for the evening, the feeble opaqueish illumination rendered by stray lanterns of paper, horn, or oiled silk, only made their everlastingly dusky interiors the more sombre and forbidding, and lent a more unfavourable shade to what must be at best but a mediocre Chinese town. The streets were small deltas thrown up by Niles whose sources were not difficult to trace,

and which were continually overflowing their borders, and leaving deposits of organic and inorganic matter quite inconceivable, in a nasal sense, out of China. It required a good bridle hand, an active pair of heels, and some severe olfactory stifling, to wend a zigzag course that was at all bearable; though our ponies were either so tired or so attached to the grateful perfumes as to incur some punishment, rather than forsake these luxuriantly balmy pools of their native land.

As the distance from the gate lengthened, so the excitement strengthened: the place was in a *furore* of unalloyed curiosity, of such a fervent quality that it should not be mentioned in the same breath with any marks of that feeling we had ever before witnessed. It was curiosity untarnished and unblemished by the humblest speck of surface refinement or shams at concealment, that made the surprised citizens look really as they felt, and that drove them to little acts unbecoming such a sedate people.

We used to think that M'Crie's description of 'John Knox is come,' in his Life of that worthy, was the best picture of astonishment and doubt we had read anywhere; and we remembered Shakespeare's delineation of a people in the same state, when he makes one of his characters declare that—'There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked, as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed; a notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow.'

But we could not have formed a proper estimate of what a regular panic of amazement and feverish inquisitiveness was, until now. Burgher and boy, maid and matron, were alike infected. Everything was neglected for the time being; the entire population seemed to have gathered about us, and knew not what to think or do, except rush about

and make a confused din. They bore no resemblance to a people gifted with the slightest modicum of what we gave them credit for in a moderate degree, common sense. They acted

> 'Like to a sort of steers,
> 'Mongst whom some beast of strange and foreign guise
> Unawares has chanced, far straying from his peers:
> So did their ghastly gaze betray their hidden fears.'

By the time we had reached the centre of the city, where stood a brick tower out of repair, and with four low arches to the cardinal points of the compass, through which ran the four main streets, each of them more slovenly looking than the one we were in, the thoroughfare was crammed with the crowd, and we were bothered by conflicting reports from a hundred throats as to the whereabouts of the best, or even any, inn at which we might put up, and thus escape from the jangling concourse.

Ma-foo had been sent to discover one down some unfathomable higgledypiggledy lane, and we, to save ourselves from instant 'squash,' had to keep moving on, until we nearly traversed the breadth of the city,—which might be a half or three-quarters of a mile,—and were near the wall on the opposite side from that we entered by, when some one in the crowd called out, 'There is the mandarin's inn.' Sure enough there was the gate of an inn, flanked by good-looking houses, being hurriedly closed on our approach, and barred within by somebody whose fears made him very clumsy at the job.

Our prospects of rest for the night were desperate—and desperate cases require desperate remedies. We thought wistfully of the comfortable quarters forsaken a few miles off, where we might then have been enjoying the very few comforts that go to make up the sum total of a Chinese inn. But no time was to be lost in vain regrets. It was dark, and the town gates before and behind were shut and bolted,

and nothing would cause them to be opened again before daybreak next morning. This was the only house of refuge for us, and it must be undauntedly tried.

M. rode up to the doors, which the trembling hands of the craven mortal behind had not yet fastened; and first knocking, then inserting the end of his riding-whip between their gaping edges, with a gentle push it opened, and we rode in amid the crush of people who thronged around us, and who were deaf to all entreaties or commands of ours to stay behind. Seeing the necessity of clearing them out again, and keeping them out, I rode up to a terror-stricken person who I thought was the brave Horatius, the keeper of the gate, and called to him to close it quickly and send away the crowd. He gave me one look—only one—of the intensest horror and dismay I ever saw depicted on the countenance of man, and fled as if pursued for his life, turning neither to the right nor left until he had reached the top of the courtyard, where he jumped at a bound a flight of four or five steps, and disappeared, like a harlequin, through the doorway of a little building. Thither we were bound to follow him, as the only means of settling the question as to whether accommodation was to be given us in this establishment or not, or where we were to go for the night.

Accordingly dismounting, and making strong demonstrations to the foremost of the multitude with whips and fists, we struggled into what did not give us the idea of being either inn, shop, office, or private dwelling-house, but a lively mixture or combination of all four. One room, partially lighted up by a large square glass lantern, profusely covered with painted flowers and birds that looked particularly unhealthy and hectic above the weak glow of the flickering tallow dips within, contained a counter on the right with a long form in front of it. Before us was another counter or table, behind which, in the farthest corner of the room, sat a dumpy,

excessively nervous-looking little man, with a very round face, a very globular head, and a very flat physiognomy, twirling his thumbs in a frenzy of agitation and dread, and wearing such a profoundly comical expression of seriousness about his puffy little eyes and superboiled dumpling countenance—he might have been sitting for a portrait of Mr. Pickwick in one of his dilemmas—that, if it had been to save the night's lodging, we could not forbear laughing heartily.

Above his head was the household tablet in the form of a small temple, with a glass front, in which dwelt the little idol—a model to the life of the distressed mortal below—before whom glimmered and smoked a few attenuated cinnamon-coloured incense-sticks. To the left was a small room, so well supplied with lamp and candles, that every nook and niche was seen to be covered and clothed and filled with all sorts and conditions of books and papers, which for length and size looked ominously like hotel-keepers' bills, with the leading characteristics of which we had already become sufficiently familiar.

In this place, guarded as it was from that we were in by a low half door, the majority of the dwellers had taken refuge —inhived themselves in the innermost crannies, and behind tables, stools, and chairs, hiding their heads as if from damage or sudden death. Such a set of fools the world never before produced.

We stood in the middle of the floor near to a large brass brazier, with a charcoal fire striving to burn itself out of our presence, below an assemblage of kettles, pots, and other tea-making apparatus, wondering how long this shock was to last, and unable to make any breach in the absurdity of the chicken-hearted bumpkins, who seemed not to hear a word addressed to them by us. Our minds were made up to stay until they either complied with our wishes, or made them-

selves complaisant enough to direct us elsewhere, so we quietly and coolly seated ourselves on the form until Ma-foo should return from his search.

Not many minutes elapsed before he did show himself, and apprised us that there was no other inn in the town (?), and he did not know what we were to do. He was told to enquire, once for all, if the people of this house would oblige us by letting us have a room and forage for our ponies on payment, and to inform them that we were travellers, and not wild beasts or savages at large. On hearing M. talk in this strain to their countrymen, the cravens picked up a few grains of courage, and risked themselves in an upright posture behind their respective bulwarks, though their fidgety movements betrayed the uneasiness they felt at heart when we looked at them.

Ma-foo advanced to my acquaintance, whose pigmy features had undergone a change from the workings of the diluted dregs of evanescent spirits he had managed to retain in their small abode, and enquired as he was bid. The little man, who, we surmised, was the landlord, screwed his lips into a purse mouth, elevated his scrubby eyebrows until they almost ran foul of the blue shaven crown, and bringing out his body—so nicely swaddled and swathed-up in the softest and whitest of cottons, and his answer at the same time, leant on the table with his plump childish paws to give dignity and force to his sentiments, which were compressed into a stern 'mae-yo,' and seemed resolved to adhere to his negative decision, so long as his adherents and supporters showed front, and no injury was done to his rotund carcase.

Our groom remonstrated and argued; little pig-tail was unmercifully obstinate, and growing quite imperious. Every word was echoed in the courtyard by the fagging mob, now so surcharged with presuming boldness and unbearable inquisitiveness, arising from the position assumed by their compatriot within, as to enter the house and gather round us.

with the greatest audacity and brusqueness, until we were almost suffocated.

When M. requested them to leave, and not obstruct the entrance of the air we so much required, they began to laugh and giggle, and showed no disposition to move, except farther into the room. Their esteem or awe, it was plain, had vanished, and we were to be the subjects of their mirth and ridicule, unless these were to be restored to them again by the sole measure at our disposal. Respect us they must, and that attribute, in the words of Greville, 'is better procured by exacting than soliciting it.'

A charge is made among them with a riding-whip, and, without a blow being inflicted on their backs, they flee as would a crowd at a fair, did a lion or a tiger escape from its den and spring among the horrified spectators.

But this suspended all diplomatic correspondence between our zealous representative and the head of the house. Little man and nearly all the others look aghast and relapse into their abject terror again. One droll old fellow we had not noticed before, with an orbicular laughing face, a pair of keen glancing eyes, and a large balloon paunch, gets himself on the other side of the counter a good way off, and grins and chuckles the whole evening, as if he saw something very funny in our perplexing situation, or in the terror and drivelling of his co-mates.

In a few minutes our host stealthily beckons over, and is seen whispering to, a long, bow-legged Chinese, who is dressed in white with large dark brown thigh-reaching gaiters, and this party moves quietly towards the door, keeping the hot brazier between himself and our side of the room. At another signal a domestic comes out of his lurking-place and proceeds to give us tea from one of the kettles, for which we try to feel grateful, though we know it is given only to keep us in play until something turns up, as we would have baited and fed a wild beast until a servant had

time to bring us a gun for its destruction. The groom is sent off once more on a survey for a house of any sort that will admit us for a few hours.

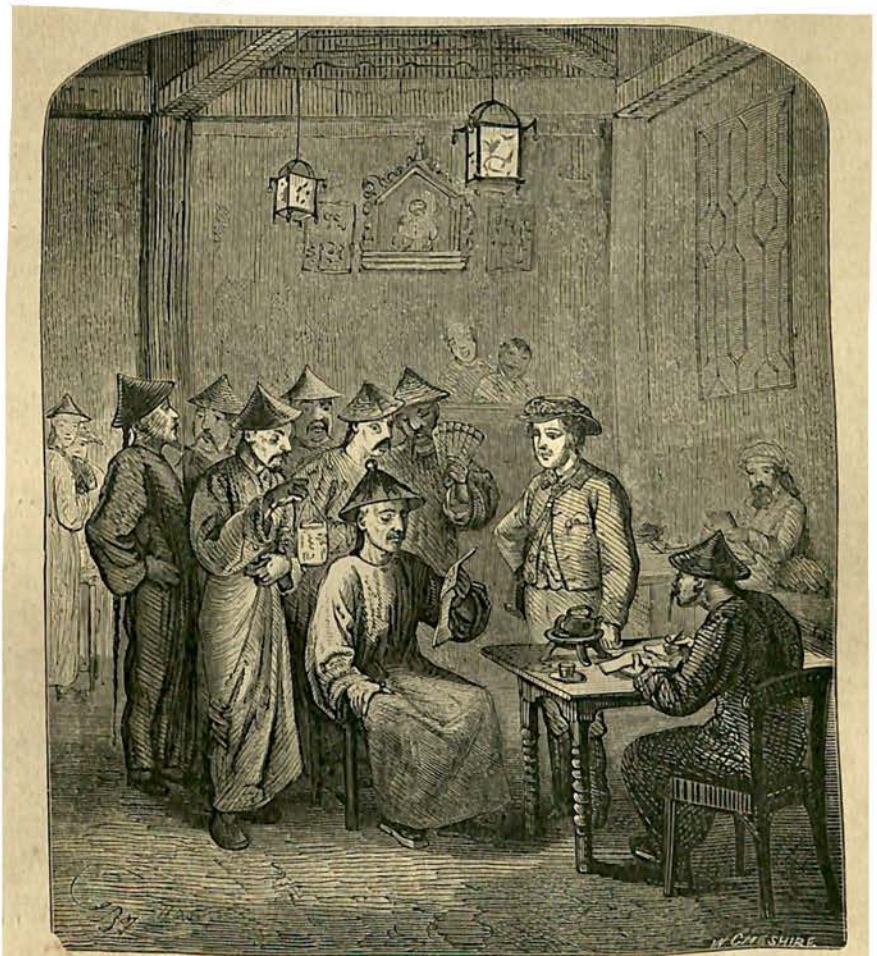
In the meantime a mandarin's clerk or lictor, a strong bouncing fellow with a good deal of false authority hanging stiffly about his thick neck and wide shoulders, comes in, and after a small confabulation with his unserene majesty, begins to reason with us, telling what we are sorry to believe to be a small narrative of fibs and crammers about the want of room, every place occupied, and the impossibility of giving us any assistance.

For the first time since leaving we must have recourse to our passports, and demand as a right that aid which they refused. The papers were produced, and evidently surprised the whole of the inmates, who thronged round to read them. The big man shakes his head, and the others retire unmoved. I wonder what they thought!

Ma-foo comes back again with the same old story and the same old repulsive expression about his features that they wore whenever he was unfortunate.

Almost at the same time a great bustle was heard outside: a lot of people rushed in, and as quickly rushed out. One of us got up and looked at them: there was a good deal of confusion and shouting and rumbling; all in the room, ourselves among the number, looked as if they expected something wonderful. At last, relief came — the mountain brought forth, not a mouse, but a mandarin — a tall, bony apparition of a man, in a long white robe, that lay on his beefless framework like a winding sheet, with deep-set eyes in a Dante-shaped head, and an aquiline nose, long, thin, and rather hooked, above a scanty moustache of about a dozen lengthy black hairs on each side that grew from the narrow upper lip of a large mouth. His face was so European, and so unlike the general run of Chinese faces, that, in the middle of the sensation created by his entrance, I

could scarcely take my eyes from it. He was also pale and thoughtful-looking, I imagined, as he walked in with an easy dignified air, carrying a fan, which the sultriness of the night caused him to use vigorously, in a long skeleton hand, the thumb of which was encircled by a wide heavy ring of greenish-white jade stone.



Inn at the Wall—the useless Passport.

This official was accompanied by a small army—a perfect *posse comitatus* of retainers and ragamuffins, bearing huge lanterns of oiled paper covered with mystic characters, and wearing conical straw hats to distinguish them from their scampish brethren outside. They also strode in with a

freedom and a mock military bearing, that would at other times have excited our risibility. But this was no moment to indulge in humour. All the Chinese in the establishment rise to their feet, look profound, and salute the great man by joined hands in front, which he returns, then gives us, *en passant*, several jerks of his almost fleshless head and neck, and with such violence that we fear the osseous structure will snap and tumble the skull at our feet. He at once enters into business with the little host, who is now himself again, and is very active in helping the big lean man to a cup of scalding tea; all the others join in the conversation unasked. The lictor has got rid of a good quantity of the pompous display he made before the arrival of his superior, and now speaks in a servile tone: several young dandies, evidently swells and men about town, come skipping in noiselessly in their white-soled shoes, with dazzling white socks forming a distinct stratum between the black uppers of the shoes and the bottoms of their blue or brown silk bandage-tied leggings, and white silken coats. Their queues are faultlessly plaited, and with the long embraided plaits of black silk cord that form a tassel at the end, are almost sweeping the ground. Everything about them bears the impress of dollishness and affectation as they swagger, strut, or skip up to where the mandarin sits, make a deep but somewhat offhand bow to that personage and to the elders of the party, and then, with a good amount of levity, betake themselves to the office, from whence they can drawl or lisp, if their dandyism carries them so far into civilisation, and have a satisfactory look at us; the jabbering members of the congregation outside, meanwhile, making tenfold more noise than they had yet done, and striving to press themselves through the heterogeneous body-guard of the 'Ta-yin.'

We had read in a translation of an old Chinese record an amusing account, which we then thought a burlesque or satire, of the first appearance in modern times of Europeans

in the 'Empire of the Centre,' in which it was stated that—

'During the reign of Ching-ti (1506), foreigners from the West, called Fa-lan-ki, or Franks, who said they had tribute, abruptly entered the Bogue,* and, by their tremendously loud guns, shook the place far and near. This was reported at Court, and an order returned to drive them away immediately, and stop the trade. At about this time also, the Hollanders, who in ancient times inhabited a wild territory, and had no intercourse with China, came to Macao in two or three large ships. Their clothes and their hair were red, their bodies tall; they had blue eyes deep sunk in their heads. Their feet were one cubit and two-tenths long, and they frightened the people by their strange appearance.'.

But that was a long time ago; and the Chinese, in every part of China, ought to have become tolerably familiar with the likenesses and characters of the various nations who had traded, and fought, and travelled among them since then.

Even of Lord Macartney's visit, the chronicler used mild language when he said that, 'in the fifty-eighth year of Kien-lung, the English, from the north west extremity of the world, and who from ancient times to the present had never reached the Middle Land, passed over an immense ocean, and came to the Court of the Universal Sovereign.'

Here we were within two hundred miles of that Court, and yet were looked upon with as much amazement, curiosity, and terror, as if we had been the primal Dutchmen or Franks who gave them such an outrageous opinion of Hesperians in general by their loud guns and *outré* figures. Our hair was neither red, nor our eyes blue; our noses might be a little longer than theirs, but were not so odd as the hawk-beak of that mandarin who sat discussing our fate with so much gravity. The garb we wore might be dusty and weather-

* The chief embouchure of the Canton river.

stained, but it was not a flaming red; and our boots, in which we did not stand very tall, though of a strange material, did not come quite up to the cubit and two-tenths in length of foot. So, what in the name of wonder did they behold in us to excite them so rabidly?

Even at Talien-whan bay, during the encampment of the army there, when we happened to ride a long way into the country, and through populous villages, we found the simple-minded rustics far more decorous in their behaviour towards us, and reasoning far more sensibly than these mad towns-people at our appearance among them. They said we were 'Yang-yin,' or Men of the Sea; that we lived always on those ships which they saw in the bay, leading in them a nomadising, seaweedy existence; and that when our legs were cramped by long confinement, we stopped at the nearest land, and lived in the white canvas houses until well again. With this, they seemed to rest content. Not so these Shan-hai-kwanites. Nothing would tranquillise them, and they made themselves very bothersome and nonsensical about us.

Negotiations were going on meanwhile; the matter had been formally explained to the magistrate by some of those about him; and Ma-foo was called up, and underwent a rather close examination, after arranging his tail down his back, and making a half-curtsey, half-bow to his worship.

The mandarin, having seen and scrutinised our passports with no evident satisfaction, endeavoured to elicit all sorts of information from our servant, merely for the sake, we thought, of asking questions and doing something—such as enquiring if there were any more Englishmen at Tien-tsin when we left? were we really going to Newchwang? what were we, and where did we come from? and so on.

This over, M. got into conversation with the functionary, and was particularly asked why he came such a long, weary distance overland to Newchwang, when he might so much more comfortably and readily have gone by sea: all the time

shirking the main point—the matter of lodgings—which was still as much in abeyance as on our arrival. M. mentioned this; but the man of probity, alas! commenced shuffling and prevaricating in a very undignified way. He was gently reminded that the passport contained a request that the civil and military authorities should give us protection and aid, in case of necessity; and that this was a case in which we required aid. He, however, continued to demur and hang fire, until the order given to us by Tsung, the Imperial Commissioner at Tien-tsin, happened to be pulled out of its bag. This was greedily laid hold of, and appeared to have far more effect than the harsh, stiff, unpalateable paper of the English passport; for no sooner had his quick eye ran over its contents than a change became visible. Our names were written down on a sheet of whitey-brown tissue paper, obsequiously brought in with the writing-slab and brush by the little landlord; this was put in the hands of an attendant, and the business of the Court was over—we were to be accommodated.

Things now wore quite another aspect, through the talismanic spell wrought by the potent fingers of Tsung. We were friends, and for the first time began to interchange civilities. M.'s silver snuff-box was unpocketed and handed round, much to the admiration of everybody within and without; the snuff was plastered in brown layers about nostrils and upper lips; and after having well scalded our tongues with boiling water, the Ta-Yin took his leave, with the same clash of chair-bearers and bustle of lantern-carriers with which he had made his advent in less auspicious moments, bestowing on us a majestic bow, and another twist of the mummified neck and skull before he departed, which formality we took care to return with as much grace as 'barbarians' could be supposed to possess.

Lanterns were procured by the domestics, and we were shown our apartments, which we soon perceived were not in the most favoured portions of the house, but at the bottom of

a back court-yard, crowded with mules, ponies, and donkeys. A little wall enclosed the dwarfish space in front of the outer door, leading to as filthy a kennel as we had been in since the night we left Tien-tsin. Musty, dusty, and foul, it had not been occupied for years. The walls were black and bare, and gave ample refuge and a permanent home to hundreds of gigantic spiders, whose extensive meshes did not suffice to thin the numbers of the thousands of flies who swarmed about our heads, buzzing and droning, delighted with the new arrivals.

The room contained nothing but old lumber and rubbish, and the windows were falling to pieces; and altogether we were as heartily disgusted at our treatment by these officials and noddies of landlords as we could well be. Their object, we had too much reason to believe, was to humbug us in every possible way, and in this particular instance they were successful; for finding that they might not turn us out of the house with impunity, they gave us the most disgraceful pigstye in the place; aware that we had no alternative but to remain and do as best we might until the morning.

Though we exhibited no acerbity or bitterness at such conduct, but plainly and dispassionately told those who lighted us down how very unkind it was to treat tired strangers so badly, we felt angry at being so duped and tricked. While we were at dinner, and trying to compensate for the fatigues and fasts of a long day, and the vexations of a humbugging evening, under the *surveillance* of countless eyes glaring everywhere around us, a small military mandarin — in so far as wearing a low grade brass button made him small — for he was as tall as most men, as scraggy as any man could be, and had shocking bad teeth, entered the room without any ceremony, followed by all the tag-rag and bob-tail these petty officials collect round them, and these again backed by masses of people of nearly all ages.

He was a vulgar-looking man, and made a slight genu-

flexion as he sat down unbidden on the edge of the brick oven-bed on which we were to sleep. His business was quizzing, and as we paid him no very marked attention, but thought him rude and officious in disturbing us at that late hour, Ma-foo was again subjected to the tearing and rending operation. When this was effected he began on us. My companion, who, doubtless, thoroughly appreciates the Chinese character for what it is worth, and could see as far as many into the deceitful motives that too often govern their acts of intercourse with foreigners, treated him very coolly and indifferently as he deserved. He wished to see our passports, and when he had got them tried to copy out some of the Chinese words, but either from excitement or timidity he could not write, and a young scribe in his promiscuous suite stepped forward to the rescue and copied what he desired. He then asked to see Tsung's missive, but this was too much of a good thing to be allowed.

M. told him that the production of that private document was neither necessary nor justifiable so long as we possessed those ordained by the Treaty (a single copy of which we did not see in any town or village along the whole of our journey), and that they alone must suffice to carry us to our destination; at the same time—bringing out the manuscript in question—to show what value we placed upon it, we threatened to tear it up into fragments before his face, and ended by asking the astounded brass button if the authorised document was good or bad? if it was the former, why did they wish to see Tsung's? if the latter, we would return to Peking or Tien-tsin in the morning, and complain of the unfriendliness, stupidity, or perversity of the officials at the Great Wall.

The fellow felt he dared not ignore the printed form, and said it was good, but asked if we would oblige him with a look at the other, as he must see it before going away. Nothing but our tired condition, the tempestuous crowd surging outside, that excluded every breath of air from us, and the

sense of heart-sickness that arose from these annoyances, induced us to lend him the coveted paper, which, having perused, he returned. Some sherry was offered, but he would not touch it; and in return he presented his snuff bottle or bottles — two curious china affairs fastened back to back like the Siamese twins—but we also declined.

Thus ended the passport business for the night. We prepared to go to sleep, and the boorish mandarin took the hint; but before he went, M. enquired if we could ascend the hills in the morning. This we were anxious to do, because our route hitherto between this place and the Pehtang-hô had been somewhat enigmatical, because of some great inaccuracies in the most recent maps which we had provided ourselves with; and as the end of the Great Wall abutting on the Gulf had been properly fixed as to latitude and longitude in the surveys made by our navy, we had only to take the bearings of several important and conspicuous landmarks that we had passed and noted, with the wall, to enable us to form some idea of the progress we had made.

Perhaps there was also a latent desire to scramble to the tops of those great peaks over which the Titanic fence wandered, and to judge for ourselves whether the wonder on the heights was as wonderful as it appeared to be on the plain and the lower levels of the sloping hills. We longed once more, in fact, to bend a willing knee against the side of the steepest mountain we could find, and where so convenient? where could the exertion serve so many purposes as here? The modern Excelsiors had climbed the highest peaks all over the world almost, and why should these rugged and eld steeps, so long locked up in inaccessible restrictions, escape?

We thought there could not be the slightest shadow of an objection to such a proposal, but we were wrong, for to our astonishment the mandarin was as ready with a No, as if it

had been in his mouth when he was born. Why could we not go to the hills? Because there were no roads, and the hills were difficult of access, and many things might happen —and every obstacle will be thrown in your way, he might have said; but we wished to hear no more. So long as the difficulty rested with ourselves we were content to risk the absence of roads, and to rely on limbs that had been pliant enough over heather and steep rock not many years ago.

We were visited no more that night by officials or myrmidons of the local government to *visé* our passports, but we were pestered by relays of scouts from the crowd, who kept continually labouring to fill the room with their bodies and stench, notwithstanding they saw others expelled in a rather ignominious manner. The people behaved not violently, certainly, but like spoilt children. No matter whether we were eating, writing, or sleeping, enter they would, though they knew they were forbidden to do so, and then commence handling the various things that lay about the room or on the ricketty table with the prying rudeness of a lot of boobies. Others would come, pull their pipes out of the leather bags, fill them, and having ignited the tobacco at the candle, seat themselves down deliberately on our bed without seeking permission or consulting our tastes.

When we unfortunate travellers were not sharp in turning them out they would fill the apartment full of smoke, and puff it into our faces until the cloudy atmosphere is almost unfit for purposes of respiration. A lot more would draw near to look at us, and cough and spit as if they had swallowed a gross of fish bones, and one half of them had lodged about the ticklish nooks in their throats. Presently we would be treated to an emission of all sorts of ventriloqual sounds, unpleasant to listen to, being intensely suggestive of bad manners and garlic; and they do all this with the most unblushing effrontery. Finally we drove them out and bolted the door.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPY SYSTEM — THE POLICE — THE FRONTIER GUARD-ROOM — A POLITE OLD SOLDIER — FRENCH POLISH AT THE GREAT WALL — THE THUMB-MOMETER — OFFICIAL OBJECTIONS TO OUR ASCENDING THE MOUNTAINS — A CONFERENCE — WOO-SHI — A SULTRY MORNING — I ATTEMPT THE ASCENT ALONE — STAVELY PEAK — TAKING BEARINGS — THE END OF THE GREAT WALL — ITS PRESENT CONDITION AND WONDERFUL COURSE — ACCOUNTS OF TRAVELLERS — A VAST CONCEPTION AND A MONUMENT OF INDUSTRY.

WE got up about five o'clock next morning, and found to our annoyance and vexation that a system of espionage had been established on our special behoof; and that some spies, in the shape of great big Chinamen, cleanly dressed, with the semi-official conical hat and red silk crown fringe, were comfortably seated in the passage outside the door, where probably they had passed the night. As soon as one of them saw M., he came forward and demanded to be shown Tsung's passport again, saying that the others were of no value, and that we could not be permitted to go up the hills. He had been taught his lesson very well, but his peremptory audacity met with no response of any kind, as M. simply refused to have anything to do with him. We proceeded to dress, and get ready for our expedition as quickly as possible, in order to have it over, and depart from such a troublesome region about midday—firmly resolved never to have anything more to do with such officials, if we could help it. We were in such a hurry that we took but one cup of tea each, and a small biscuit, intending to breakfast when the work was done, which, we fancied, would not take more than three or four hours at the utmost. But in this we deceived ourselves.

We were determined to attempt the ascent of the nearest peak, to measure its height, and to get the bearings of the various places we were about to pass; and for these purposes we took with us a rather large Aneroid barometer, and a very clumsy iron thermometer—the only one we could procure at Tien-tsin—with a small pocket compass. Though so bent on this project, however, we were not the less ready to desist from this or any other transaction that might be wrong, be regarded as offensive to the authorities, or give rise to troublesome after-consequences. We moved with the spirit of the Treaty ever before us, and a desire to conciliate, rather than squabble with the people we met on the way; and if they gave us any sufficient reason why we should not do this or that, we would have gladly reconciled ourselves to their wishes. Such, I am sure, were the feelings that influenced my companion, as well as myself, that morning, and the line of conduct that was to guide us in our dealings with the equivocating mandarins.

One of the runners had watched our preparations, and though we were but a few minutes in putting on the lightest suit we possessed, and in drawing on the lightest pair of boots of our small assortment—never expecting that we should have a difficult task in climbing what did not appear to be very lofty mountains—the man had vanished before we left the room. The others preceded and followed us, as much to observe our movements as to keep off the people. They were waiting in hundreds at that early hour outside the inn, and were with difficulty kept in check by these shouting Goliaths. The streets were wide and roomy for ordinary traffic; but like those of large European cities, Rome excepted, before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they were unpaved, and impassable in very many places from the lodgement of rain and surface water. The shops looked as if they drove some trade, and were numerous enough in proportion to the number of dwellings.

Near the inn was a government building, with glaringly painted gates, and two great guardian dog-monsters, covered with black and brown circular spots, defending the doorway. A few paces further on was another door, garnished in the same grotesque manner, which was supposed to belong to the Custom-house, as this town, we were told, levies a tax on the exports and imports that pass through to or from Mantchuria. Not far from this we came to an archway that had once been substantial and strong, but was now in a fissured and tottering condition, and supported below by a semicircular wooden structure, propped up by beams of timber. This was one of the venerable arches of the wall which bisected this, the eastern, side of the town in its course to the beach and the mountains.

On the other side we entered another portion of the town enclosed on the east side by its own wall, and containing a continuation of the chief thoroughfare, with many houses and shops; and, most important of all, on the left hand, as we passed along, there was the guard or garrison-room near the outer gate. At that hour we were surprised to find it clustered with soldiers—or rather unarmed attendants—clothed in long skirts of white, primrose-coloured, or blue, gauze and brocades, with a variety of coloured buttons on their hats, and apparently looking out for us rather anxiously. As we approached, they one and all made way for us, and pointed to the guard-room door. We could not at first comprehend their meaning, and thought for a moment that all our prospects of getting up to the hills were at an end; but on looking towards the few steps that raised the floor from the ground, we saw an old blue-button mandarin, surrounded by a small host of officers, waving his hand to us, and looking remarkably kind and civil.

This augured well for us; the old fellow's smile was like an oasis in the Sahara, after so much tantalising and thwarting; and as he beckoned us in, I thought of a traveller who

had not journeyed quite so far out of the way, and yet had cause to exclaim, 'Hail! ye small sweet courtesies of life, for smooth do ye make the road of it.'

We ascended the steps at once, and as our unknown friend was evidently above the rank of those we had been contending with, and saluted us most cordially with hands clasped before his breast, as did the others, we made the best attempt to reciprocate the welcome thus unexpectedly given to us; and were then conducted into the room—a very naked collection of boards and bricks, with a sort of raised couch or platform, on which the commandant of the garrison—for such he turned out to be—seated himself, after he had seen us seated by him on another couch. I wondered if the Chinese general who commanded the troops in this then important town, and who first called in the wild Tartars of Liau-toong to assist him—thus giving them an opportunity of usurping the government—had sat in that nicely cushioned seat when the fierce Mantchus were hovering without the wall, ready to pounce upon anything that would forward their schemes—rob, murder, assault, storm the bastions, or batter the trusty gates!

The national beverage was brought in by a waiter, and everyone was supplied with a quantum of the hot infusion, a stimulant to conversation, and a generator of kindly sympathies. M. did his utmost to get up and carry on a chat with the old soldier—and if I could dispose myself to be a judge on that occasion, I should say he was eminently successful, and acquitted himself in the enunciation of the appalling smashing up of sounds that follows a most active series of lingual and laryngeal gymnastics in a way that must have astonished himself. Ma-foo, our interpreter-in-chief, had been left at the inn to superintend the cooking of mutton-chops, sweet potatoes, and vegetables, *ad libitum*, for breakfast, therefore my companion was driven on his own

resources, which appeared, by the way, to become augmented and more useful every day.

While the gossip was going on, I had time enough to jot down our entertainer's likeness in my memory, and without staring at him too markedly, to observe that underneath the beautifully-wrought and bleached straw hat, surmounted by the deep blue glass ball, and thatched by a long layer of red floss silk, there was a perfect set of Mongolian features. His age might be about fifty-eight, though he looked older, and his brow and cheeks were a good deal wrinkled; but the agreeable face was sadly marred on a near scrutiny, by a shocking set of carious front teeth, which the thick averted lips, or the straggling hairs of the moustache, could not hide. This is a common enough defect among the lower orders in the north, who never clean their teeth from youth to old age; but in the upper classes, it looks much worse and creates unpleasant feelings.

There was a kingly dignity about him that was winning, and his address was free and easy while talking to men of another country for the first time. Unlike the others, he wore a long robe of light-blue figured silk, confined around the waist by a narrow plaited belt, with two buckles of cornelian in front, and a pair of enormous black satin boots, with canoe toes and ponderous soles—doubtless his best summer suit donned for our reception.

The complimentary questions were first exchanged. Ages were requested, in which he could not understand why one of us being the same age as the other should wear a longer beard, as it was the sign of a greater number of years.

What was our destination, and how did we propose to return, by sea or by land?

By sea.

At this he affected to be very sorry that he should not have the honour of inviting us to dine with him, and

mimicked weeping so very well, that we could not forbear being amused, and showing that we were so. As he went on, his gestures got stronger in their significance, and his pantomimic expressions more ludicrous; but if clever in this department, he was much more so in displaying every moment the most flattering daubs of French polish, and

A polite old Soldier

trying to excel in giving us a high opinion of ourselves by very windy words.

Everything was good that we had; even the passports—which he prayed might be shown him, in order that he might register our worshipful names—were acknowledged to be good; and all good things were indicated at once, as such, by his holding up a thumb with a very long nail and a very expensive jade ring on it. When he felt the leather of our boots, up went the thumb; when he fingered the cloth of our trousers up went the thumb; when told that we had travelled so many li for so many days, the thumb was

cocked very high; indeed the thumb-mometer seemed ever to be on the ascendant, until M. mentioned our going up the hill; then the little finger went up. It was bad.

Was there any particular objection, or any particular order prohibiting strangers from going up there?

No.

Then why could we not go up?

The thin horny-tipped little finger was elevated like a jack-in-the-box, while he told us that the sun was very hot, there were no roads, the hills were a long way off, and covered with stones, and the Chinese never went up there.

There were no other objections?

No.

Then we were inclined to attempt the ascent, as we did not much mind the sun, and stones and hills were familiar to us.

A little more talk, and M.'s snuff-box was honoured by an upright thumb, and the abstraction of a small shovelful of snuff. Then the little china bottles were drawn out from their recesses and passed to us. These toyish sneeshin-mulls had a neat little stopper of cork or wood, topped by jade or rose-quartz, in which was fastened a regular bone or ivory spoon, exactly like some we have seen in Scotland; but the Chinese did not carry their pungent dose to the nostrils by it, but only used it to transfer a little heap of the light brown over-dried nose provender to the back of their hand, and then from this to press it over the nasal extremity and lip, with a chance of a fraction of it penetrating to the excitory nerves only by the ordinary act of inspiration. I never yet saw a snuffer sneeze, though the social pinch is with them notorious; so that when my unaccustomed organ of smell rebelled at the unsavoury introduction, and repetitions of sneezing yells made the walls ring again, they all laughed, and the thumb-mometer again rose in praise.

But the morning was wearing on, and we had tarried

among them long enough, so we rose to take our leave, and the general, or whatever his rank might be, accompanied us to the door with great politeness.

The other officers about him were really fine men—tall, strong, and well-proportioned as the sons of Anak, with some very jovial cheerful faces among them. All had rigged themselves out in modest-coloured summer crape or muslin gowns, the low conical hat, and black satin boots, and with the dress bound easily round the middle, they looked comfortable and cool as they fanned themselves, and toyed with these feminine appendages, which they know so well how to use in sultry weather. Those who were mounted at times—the cavalry men—had the slide slits in skirts very long, and tags and twisted buttons stitched on in various places, to tuck them up by when in the saddle. Not a single man was armed with anything beyond his fan, neither did we see a weapon about the room save two or three sabres: a rather singular circumstance, we thought, considering that this was a large town—in a comparative sense only, for few of the northern towns we have seen come at all near the populousness or size of what are called large towns in the South—and a very important pass, in a Chinese point of view.

When we left, three or four of these gentlemen escorted us, but at a very respectful distance, and without speaking, except to the crowd. Walking through the gateway, which was not bastioned in the ordinary manner—as the Great Wall, passing but a short distance within it, obviated the necessity for such a work—we are beyond the artificial boundaries, on the Mantchu side of the country, and turning suddenly northward, speed alongside the Great Wall, as near as the narrow footpath will permit.

We walked sharply and hurriedly — for it was past six o'clock — and our guard behind did the same, conversing in a gay undertone at first, but soon dropping this for a

detached remark at lengthening intervals, growing fainter and fainter, until they were puffing and struggling, and as uncomfortable as stranded whales, the ground between us increasing with every stride. They must have given in at about a mile, for when we had got about two miles up towards the foot of the range, and were still pursuing a narrow track through low crops of wheat, we heard some one shouting loudly after us that there was no road, and, looking back, discovered that the bulky men had been beaten off, and that there was a young understrapper with a brimmed-up hat, and lots of red cord dancing about its top, running after us as hard as he could. He was telling us a manifest story, and violating the integrity of his countrymen by a statement slightly incorrect in point of fact, as we at once proved to him by a reference to the road we were then on. He asked if we were determined to proceed, and was answered that we were; and, to convince him of this, we resumed our gentle promenade — at which token of our resolution he turned back.

There was no accounting for this species of want of candour on the part of the authorities, and we were a little puzzled in what light to view it, considering that they had already admitted the absence of orders or cogent reasons to intercept us, except in those little impediments which Nature offered, and which we were content to surmount, if practicable, at our own risk. Yet here was a squad of *gens d'armes* dodging and bawling about, and all but ordering us back, acting, without a doubt, under instructions from our courteous friend in the guard-house, whose motives for not telling us in plain language that we were about to do wrong, we could not even guess at for some time.

There is a sentence in the Chinese vocabulary — a sort of idiomatic expression, for which those who have read Mrs. Hamilton's homely Scotch tale of the 'Cottagers of Glenburnie,' would find an equivalent in Mrs. McClartey's

inevitable answer to every suggestion for the improvement of her slatternly household — 'I canna be fashed; it will be weel enough in time;' and the too familiar sentiment of to-day, 'I can't be bothered; do anything you like, if it doesn't trouble me,' would be found an approximation to it in sense as it would in deed.

This shibboleth of negligence and procrastination is 'Woo-shi;' and only to its employment by the military governor, when we asked for information and permission, and his deputing these small fry to act in accordance therewith, and to do as best they might without disturbing him, could we attribute the annoyance we encountered.

When within about a mile of the mountains, M. could go no farther with safety, for the morning had turned out so very unusually sultry and oppressive, and the heat so stifling and distressing, that he felt its effects far more than he had done since we left Tien-tsin; and, I must confess, I felt sick a little and rather fatigued. There is something particularly morbid and malevolent in the summer-morning's sun of North China, before it has reached very high in the heavens, and just when its beams are sweeping horizontally or obliquely about the neck and body; and at these times, when exposed, I have always experienced sensations of giddiness and sickly heaviness, unknown at other periods of the day; and I was not alone in this respect. To those who would sanction the imprudences of ordinary travellers, and encourage their erratic wanderings in this direction, we would parody Lord Chesterfield's advice about the evening dews, and say —

> 'The rays of the morning most carefully shun,
> They're the sickliest darts thrown out by the sun.'

I volunteered to go alone, though, had I been certain that remaining on the plain without venturing on the achievement of what we had promised or threatened, would be

construed to our disadvantage, I should not have done so. Taking the bulky instruments, which I was obliged to carry in my hands, and leaving M. in a shady clump of fir trees near some cottages, I started off. I had not gone many yards before two mandarins, mounted on ponies, came rattling up, and called out some indistinguishable jargon; but my companion justly divined their intentions, and bade me take no notice of them, while he kept them in play below.

Presently the base of the mountains was gained, but so precipitous and rugged were they in every aspect, that the difficulty was where to select a place from which to commence the ascent. The ravines between the advanced spurs were so narrow and steep, and so thickly strewn with rough masses of rock, that to walk through them to a more favourable side was impossible with the light boots I had on; and the sides of the heights before me were so savagely perpendicular to climb, even for a person with both hands at liberty, that I avow, though I had already done my share of craggy rocks and steep hills, I was now rather taken aback. I looked wistfully towards that moderately-sloping chine, some mile or so off, up which the wall rose from the plain to its loftiest elevation; but the ground between was so broken that a long time would have been consumed in getting to it, and then it was problematical enough if the pinnacles overhanging it would have been more easy of access.

Topped they must be, however, and that without delay, or the Philistines will be upon me, and deter me for an indefinite time. As the very conspicuous tower of the wall on the loftiest peak, over which that barrier wends, and which is almost the loftiest peak in the range from whence we are looking at it, is beetling immediately overhead, and was the one fixed upon for our observations, I at once face the difficulty by taking a zigzag course up the side of what I imagined to be the least formidable of the nearest mountains.

The massy angular *débris* of unknown centuries overcome, the clambering process commenced in earnest.

Searching around before rising, not a mark of a path to indicate the direction — not a sheep or a goat track even — is to be scanned; so I have to stretch out as best I may, fighting up against pieces of slope, carpeted with a thin, short grass, that to the soles of my boots feels like smooth ice, and is almost incapable of affording a foothold. After, perhaps, two or three hundred yards of this, bare vertical sheets of rock would suddenly meet me and bar further advancement that way, necessitating retrogression and fresh trials in different directions, until, after an hour and a half's as hard work as the best-trained mountaineer could encounter — over obstructions and wearying impediments, more harassing to the mind than those of the Aonian mount, and more leg-tiring than I found the more than 3,000 feet of stony ravine that conducted me to the top of the Table Mountain at Cape Town, on a South African midsummer's day — I won the coveted peak, and completed the ascension by toiling into the summit of the little ruined tower that had seemed so far above my strength from the plain below.

Unmingled pleasure, and I fear a large instalment of vanity, were uppermost in my breast as I stood on that pinnacled mountain-top where the foot of European had never before trodden, where the most adventurous of the dwellers beneath would never dream of coming, and where, perhaps, the presence of man had been unknown for long centuries. Hastily throwing open the lid of the barometer case, and planting it and the thermometer in the best nooks I could reach, I sat down among the bricks of the ruinous tower — much in need of a rest, and overpowered with thirst, for I had taken no flask, and not a drop of water was to be had on the way up — to take the bearings of the landmarks, which were just becoming visible in the steamy haze of the morning, and to leisurely survey the country around. As I shrink

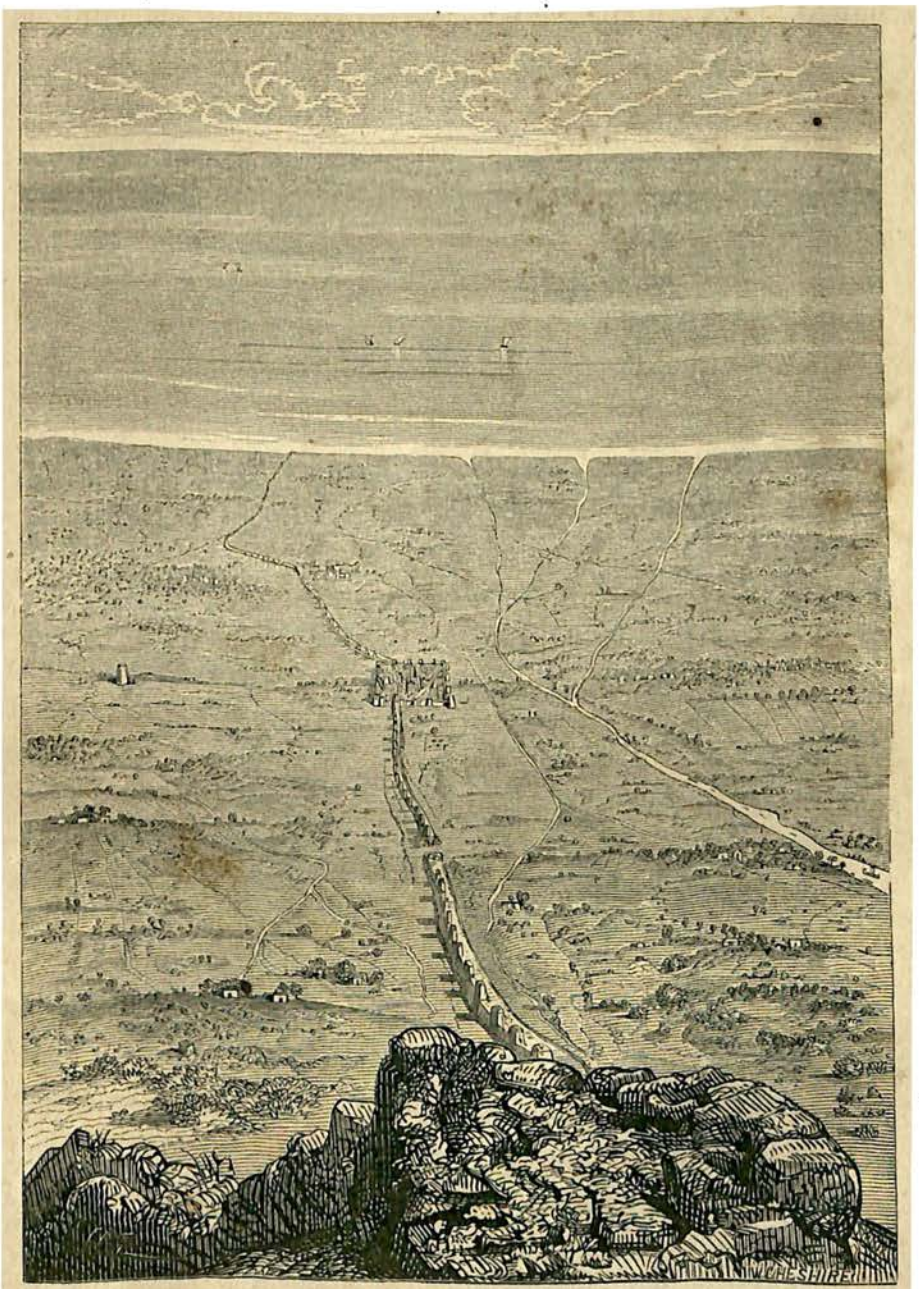
beneath a corner of the crumbling masonry that yet interposes between me and the scorching sun, let me try to describe, however confusedly and imperfectly, the novel panorama as it unrolls its wide scene before me; and dwell especially on what forms its strongest attraction, its most fascinating embellishment,—its world-renowned monument.

Away before me, to the far south, unbounded by any visible land, without a dimple or a break to blemish its surface after the storm, and engirded on the edge nearest me by a crescentic border or socket of yellow glistering sand, lay the waters of the Gulf or Eastern Sea in a dazzling blaze of white light. It lies like a silver mirror in a partial frame of gold, with the faintly brown sails of three junks standing immoveable, as it were, on the distant expanse, like so many nocturnal moths surprised by the dawn of day and enchanted, with their wings folded back, by the magical reflection of the brilliant looking-glass. To the middle of the slightly convex edge of the golden crescent or frame, curiously and cunningly wrought and adorned by man's hand, and securely fastened to it by a massive clamp of dark stone, is wedded a fitting and proper handle to such a glorious natural mirror, the Wang-li Chang-ching, or wall of ten thousand lí.

From the sea to where I am ensconced, a distance of about eight or nine miles, and from that away among the hills, where I can only catch a glimpse of the interminable line of fortification here and there, I must have a range of prospect of about twenty miles or more.

Where it commences by a bold abutment through the sandy beach into the gulf there is a large black mass of building like a fortress, with a temple roof scarcely discernible amidst the pile; and continuing from this—wide, high, and solid, apparently with square towers, at first hard to be distinguished from the body of the work, but soon coming out in trenchant outline as they face the Mantchu country,—it creeps on, a bold fence across the level landscape, which is, at

this distance inland, and far east and west, variegated by all manner of lively colours, from the ochrey red of sand and



The Great Wall from Stavely Peak to the Gulf.

soil to the deep green of tiny plantation, and limited coppice, or millet and maize field, and interspersed with cottage and

hamlet; while running parallel with the wall on the China frontier, darts the limpid Shi-ho, like a streak of moving quicksilver, with an easy bend or swerve until it reaches the sands, when it throws out three fairy fingers to grasp the skirt of the sea.

At a little place burrowing among trees, which is perhaps Ning-hai, it makes an acute wheel inwards, until it touches the side of the group of buildings that dot the border of the town. Starting off again on its almost direct road, with the wide-based and battlemented towers courageously standing out at equal distances apart, that give it a very symmetrical and warlike front, it makes a dash through one side of the quadrangular wall of Shan-hai Kwan, about four or five miles from its starting-point, and separating a portion of the city, bursts out with larger looking towers and a broader parapet, steering its leviathan proportions in my direction with only one trifling deflection outwards. It bears no marks of decay from where I am tracing it, until it gets about a mile on this side of the town, when fissures and flaws blur its face at times here and there. At one place a portion of the parapet has given way, and left a ghastly void in the notched and crenelated ridge; at another, nearer still, a larger piece has tumbled down and exposed a deep gash in the parapet; there, the thickness of the building itself has suffered, and its width dwindles down considerably; here, a damaging breach gapes in its face, and the warrior bastions themselves are trembling in dilapidation and decay, and seem as if they were about to part from the great embankment that had supported them so long.

Presently, alas! the eye alights all at once on a deadly lane torn across its stately array to the very ground, and where an arch had once bridged some petty streamlet, long since dried up.

'The sweeping sword of Time
Has sung its death dirge.'—

And there lies a scattered heap of rubbish about an opening extensive enough to allow of a column of men marching through. This is a veritable break-down, and detracts very much from the expectations I had entertained of its entireness and durability. But the structure rallies quickly, and soon after raises itself on the low-angled spur that is covered with a dusky herbage, and with more or less of cracks, gaps, and chasms, it comes up with an easy grace to the middle of a bald declivity which it deftly tops and deposits a tower thereon, in good preservation, but a few hundred yards from my place of vantage. Having done this it suddenly changes its mind (for I feel as if looking at some vast monster since it began its heavenward rise), as if it saw me, and flies off at a tangent to the east—from the sea it has been progressing from south to north—down and up a flat-sided gulley to my peak, amalgamating itself with the partially demolished turret and disjointed brickwork that can but scrimply contain itself, the rocky space is so small and uneven. Then it sweeps away from me with a dive below the projecting crag where the eyes can but strain themselves after it, till the gorge of a black ravine has been met, when its height, which has been gradually decreasing since it began its vagaries, is somewhat increased, and lasts only so long as it has had time to traverse the bottom and begin another abrupt flexure. There it contracts its bulk as it scales impetuously one peak more cloud-rifting than the one I am in possession of, dotting little square towers closely together where the passes between the rough steep mountains might be accessible; which it no sooner accomplishes than it is flung wildly again down the concave spine of the slippery mountain, only to be thrust up an adjoining one.

And thus it continues to wander for miles and miles, retreating and advancing, bending up and doubling down, now lost altogether, now starting at once from the side of a cliff which it has wound itself round, in a manner almost

surpassing belief, planting tiny square towers closely together where the clefts and passes between the rough steep mountains indicate a possibility of their being practicable; and throwing out one, two, or even three additional barriers or ramifications to aid that in front across those constricted valleys where a few men might be able to scramble; posting odd turrets in the strangest places where the wall zigzags to and fro, and erecting castellated towers on the spiked points of the lordly mountains, like aerial donjon-keeps of the feudal ages. More wonderful and Cyclopean is it to behold, even from my eyrie in mid heaven, than the ancient castles of the Pelasgi could have been to the credulous Greeks.

As a general rule, however, it does not always mount the grandest peaks, but only here and there, for some eccentric and not very obvious reason of the architects; standing generally outside, and a few feet below, rather than above the very topmost pinnacles of the mountains it overruns. So much for the general outline and direction of the colossal monument, as I have anxiously sought to trace it from its origin away on the tempest-beaten shore up to my retreat; and from thence as it goes away bounding magnificently up hill and down dale, giving one the idea of an exciting steeplechase, with tower after tower flying up into the unclouded sky,—like the body of a rider when his horse is clearing a succession of stiff fences on the opposite side of the field,—until it has vanished among the multitudinous grey mountain summits that recede into blue space.

Now for the scanty details that I contrived to put together on my way from the town.

At Shan-hai Kwan, I noticed that the arch passed under was propped up by a timber framework, and looked unsafe; and when I walked along through the fields adjoining the town —where the wall is exactly the same in construction, height, and width as that of the town itself, though very much older looking—I saw the marks of many recent repairs on

the outside, as if the maintainance of it in a respectable, if not a defensible, condition was believed to be still of some moment to the reputation and safety of the Custom-house city. In all respects, on the plain, it differs little, if anything, from the ordinary enclosing walls of Northern Chinese towns; and if anyone could imagine such a defence stretching out in an almost straight line for eight or nine miles, he would have some idea of the Great Wall on the lowland, as it yet frowns towards Mantchuria.

I have remarked that at little more than a mile or so on this side of the 'Kwan' it was ruinous in more places than one, and that there was no symptom of its having been otherwise than neglected in this part for many generations. Its occupation there was gone—the enemy it had awed and challenged without was now, for two hundred and eighteen years, within; and the only purpose it served was diverting the produce of the two countries through the gates of the Hill-sea barrier, where taxes might be levied, and goods and passengers scrutinised.

At the town, and until it nears the hills, its total height may range from thirty to forty feet, including five or six feet for a crenelated parapet on the eastern side; and the width of its rampart twenty or twenty-five feet at most; while the eye-delighting towers are about ten feet higher than the parapet, are at the base thirty or forty feet square, gradually narrowing as they ascend, and are from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards apart. They, with the walls, have been admirably built to withstand the devastations of ages of exposure in such a climate. The basement or foundation for the whole is widely and compactly formed for bearing the weight of such a load of matter, by imperishable granite blocks imposed on each other to an elevation of six or eight feet from the ground. On this the body of the building is reared, consisting of an internal bank of earth tightly rammed and packed, and encased in a

sloping brick shell of no great thickness, embedded very firmly in mortar of great apparent strength and hardness —consisting, so far as I can judge, of a large proportion of remarkably white lime, similar to the chunam of India, mixed with sand and pebbles in very small quantity. The courses of the brickwork were regular and well pointed, and in working up the wall the observer could scarcely fail to notice that it had only been laid in layers six or eight feet deep at a time; leading him to suppose that the builders had been fully alive to the necessity of allowing one part to settle down and solidify before building any higher, in order to prevent displacement and speedy demolition from premature shrinking.

The bricks are of the usual large description employed in the city walls of this part of China, and are sharp and evenly moulded, measuring nine inches in length, four and a half in width, and two and a half in thickness—much less in size, certainly, than those of some of the smaller pyramids of Egypt—as in that of Howara, for instance, the bricks of which measure seventeen and a half inches long by eight and three-quarters in width, and five-and-a-half inches thick. They seem very hard and tough, and appear to be made of a light sandy clay, thoroughly well tempered, with a good number of quartz chips in their substance, but whether purposely or accidentally introduced it would be unsafe to say. From their colour and consistency, I am inclined to believe that they have been slowly burnt in kilns supplied with an insufficiency of air, by which the smouldering heat and smoke of the wood or straw used to bake them has imparted to the clay the characteristic bluish-grey or dark slate colour they now wear.

Did the traveller penetrate along its course no farther than from the sea to the town, he would be apt to conclude that the myriad lí wall was the same in size and preservation throughout its erratic incurvations, angles, and Pegasus-like

flight over the Chinese Grampians, and would begin to calculate and theorise accordingly. I should, I fear, have done so, its appearance from below is so deceptive, had I not climbed to the vertex of the stateliest peak on which there is a tower, and been made aware of the difference.

Whenever the wall begins to seek the mountains it becomes less in bulk and more decrepid. The height is reduced; the breadth of rampart melts away; the vigilant and stern towers sink into very mediocre stature, and their adamantine sides collapse into most modest proportions; so that the Great Wall on the dangerous plain is not the Great Wall on the impregnable heights. The tower on which I am seated, registering these notes, is a little less than six feet square, and occupies every available inch of the cliff's crown. What its altitude may have been I cannot be certain, for either from decay, lightning-stroke, or thunder-bolt, or the hurricanes of winter, destruction has swept it down to within eight feet of the base. It is, or has been, built of brick, but the rampart diverging from it, which is no more than eight feet in width, is of the unhewn loose stones lying in such abundance everywhere about, and bound together with the same hard cement as that used for the bricks. In many places among the hills this wall of stones is thrown down, or rased to the naked rock, and nothing denotes its existence or the line of its ambitious career, save little collections of rubble or a thin ridge of stones marking its basement breadth.

Nowhere here can I detect the slightest semblance of a parapet; indeed, from the appearance of the best preserved portions, there does not seem any likelihood of the barrier among the mountains ever having had such an addition, or ever being anything else but a strong stone wall, furnished only with turrets at unequal intervals for its defence. These turrets, from the manner and the excellent materials of which they are built, are nearly all in an admirable condition, and look as if they had not been many years from the hands of

the builder; but my pervading idea in surveying all the extensive work that now comes within my range of vision, is that of desolation and decay; the more salient and broad features of the fabric alone standing—as they will do for many, many centuries to come—to commemorate an era in Chinese history, and the Herculean efforts of a great nation in byegone ages to preserve itself from invasion and subjection.

Such is the Great Wall at, and near, the Eastern Sea. To the north and westward, however, it must have been constructed on a grander and more substantial scale, if the accounts of visitors in that direction are to be credited; and may have been kept in repair from time to time, when this portion of the unassailable mountain-line has been allowed to stand or fall as it might chance, without the needful intervention of those for whom it had been erected. Some of these accounts, notwithstanding, are doubtful enough, and, to say the least of them, rather overdrawn. For example the Jesuit Missionary, Kircher, says:—

'This work is so wondrous strong, that it is for the greatest part a source of admiration to this day; for, through the many vicissitudes of the empire, changes of dynasties, batteries and assaults, not only of the enemy, but of violent tempests, deluges of rain, shaking winds and wearing weather, yet it discovers no signs of demolishment, nor is it cracked or crazed with age, but appears almost as in its first strength, greatness, and beauty; and well it may be, for whose solidity whole mountains, by ripping up their rocky bowels for stones, were levelled, and vast deserts, buried with deep and swallowing sand, were swept clean to the firm ground.'

A statement that does not tally with what is to be found here. The more trustworthy Father Gerbillon had such exaggerations in his mind when he declares that 'it is, indeed, one of the most surprising and extraordinary works in the world; yet it cannot be denied that those travellers who have mentioned it have over-magnified it, imagining, no doubt,

that it was in its whole extent the same as they saw it in those parts nearest Peking, or at certain of the most important passes, where it is, indeed, very strong and well-built, as also very high and thick.'

Still, in spite of all these little inaccuracies, for the age in which it was designed and executed, it is beyond belief a great conception—an enterprise that makes one feel astonished by the immensity of its extent. Even to a Westerner, who has seen some of the triumphs of nineteenth century engineering, and undertakings such as the old world never dreamt of, it seems all but impossible that any people could set themselves down to the performance of so monstrous a difficulty. There is no great amount of skill; there is little, if anything, of ingenuity displayed in its erection, so far as I can see; but there is work—there is labour for giants—in the structure, and this character appears in every brick that goes to make up the solid outline of its towers. The latter are only within the scope of the most practised climber, and intrude themselves so menacingly into the upper world, that one almost expects to see them thronged by rebellious Titans aspiring to make war with Heaven.

In every stone of that rampart embankment that embraces with a petrous girdle the confines of far off Cathay, there is a tale of toil and fatigue such as, perhaps, the modern world never knew, silently told in the computed one thousand two hundred and fifty miles of the country, from east to west, over which it wanders.

Surely the king and the people who lived a little more than two thousand years ago: who have left their memories and their autographs written in such a bold hand over such a great tract of the world's uneven surface: and who have submitted to the scrutiny and criticism of innumerable generations such an astounding trophy of human industry and patience, were very different men to those of the present day, and had very much higher incentives to the achievement

of greatness and the maintenance of national independence, than the apathetic fratricides and blasphemous robbers of eighteen hundred and sixty-one!

It is true that a diversity of opinions exists, both among Europeans and Chinese, as to the public and private character of the prince under whose auspices the Great Wall was built, and the motives that swayed him in this, as in other acts; and there is much difficulty in acquiring any reliable information that might lead us to look with favourable eyes on the career of such a despotic Eastern potentate. He appears to have had—like other monarchs who might be selected from the annals of the world—a mixture of good and bad qualities; but, for a Chinese emperor, the good probably more than compensated for the bad.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HISTORY OF THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA — ITS CHARACTER AS A WORTHY NATIONAL TROPHY COMPARED WITH SOME OTHER WORKS OF ANTIQUITY —A HOT DESCENT AND A LOST OUTLET — FEARFUL MIDDAY HEAT — IMPENDING SUNSTROKE AND ITS SENSATIONS — A HARD DAY'S STRUGGLE — MERCIFUL FOUNTAINS — A HAPPY RESURRECTION AND FRIENDLY PEASANTRY.

NOW that I have got thus far into the bowels of the Celestial land, and have carefully observed its greatest marvel, let me brush away the cobwebs and dust that shroud its paternity, and glean all the information respecting it, here accessible; for I am bound to acknowledge that I can hardly agree with those who assert that the erection of such a safeguard, by a peaceable and rather timid people, was the whim of a tyrant, and the gravest act of despotism, as well as of folly, that an autocrat could be guilty of.

Chinese history is abstruse and oftentimes perplexing, but I will consult only the best authorities.

It is known that, for many centuries before the Christian era, China was divided into a number of feudal states, in something the same way that Europe was twelve or thirteen hundred years ago, and that the same amount of turbulence and disputation was prevalent among the chiefs or princes that we find recorded in Western history. The number and power of these states was in proportion to the physical strength and political influence, or the weakness and temerity of the reigning monarch, who might sometimes be able to reduce them to complete subordination, and at other times rule only by their sufferance.

Under the Chow dynasty, which terminated in B.C. 249,

having lasted for 873 years,—the longest period of any reign mentioned in history,—the feudal house or state of Tsin, in the North-west, had long been the most formidable from the bold and arrogant character of its princes, its extent of territory, and the number of retainers it could send into the field.

One of these leaders, Chau-Siang Wang, carried his encroachments into the acknowledged imperial possessions, and compelled the sovereign, Tungchau Kiun, the last of the line, to humble himself at his feet, and surrender his crown; then content with what he had effected, he deputed his son to finish the work and reap the reward. As brave and politic, or as cunning as his parent, the son was not long in reducing the six states, which then formed the bulk of the empire, and in bending them to his sway; and the better to prevent their ever becoming again a source of trouble or uneasiness, he divided them into thirty-six provinces, principalities or 'keun,' which he placed in the hands of responsible governors. He at the same time sought to establish his authority, and reconcile his subjects to their change of rulers, by reforming abuses that had existed in the late government, and by remedying as far as he could the injurious effects of the feudal usages. He made progresses and inspections in great state throughout his dominions, to ascertain that his orders were obeyed, and that no injustice was done to the people. Moreover, he furthered their interests and welfare by opening canals and public roads to promote intercourse and trade over the country, by superintending and aiding the building of public edifices and other works, and by enlarging and improving the cities and towns, until he had consolidated the empire into one great nation. He took the title of Tche-hwangti, or first emperor of the Ta Tsin, or Great Tsin dynasty—from which name the people of the West are supposed to have derived the term China, and not from the mongrel *Chin-Chin*, the semi-

Anglicised welcome, or 'how d' ye do,' that amateur philologists — fresh arrivals in the land — are ready to declare is the origin of the popular appellation.

So successful and rapid was the advancement of the empire, and such lustre did the rule of this emperor bring upon it, that he has been styled the Napoleon of China. One European historian, Klaproth, has conferred on him high praise as a man of wisdom and resolution; but the native annalists, for some reasons, abhor his name and his reign. Perhaps one of these reasons arose from his having built an immense palace, or collection of palaces, adjoining each other, at the new capital he had founded, in imitation of those of the princes whom he had overcome; and to the apartments of this residence he commanded that all the valuable fittings and furniture belonging to the originals, with all the people who inhabited them, should be brought, and that everything should be arranged as it had been in the different dwellings.

This was certainly a very mild act of tyranny, after what the historical student has been told about some of the despots of other nations; but his next recorded deed of shame, if true (for some believe it to be a fable to serve the ends of certain Chinese historians), was undoubtedly a very heinous and barbarous one; for, through insatiable vanity in desiring to be considered by succeeding generations the first emperor of the Chinese race — or, as others say, at the instigation of a worthless minister — he ordered the destruction of all the histories and classics extant, not even sparing the labours of the idolised Confucius and Mencius, only exempting for some strange reason the books on law and physic. To be certain that no copy should be reproduced, nor any account of his rash action transmitted to posterity, he caused all the scholars and learned men, to the number of four hundred and sixty, to be thrown into pits or buried alive. But as a set-off against these registered cruelties and despotic whims,

he valiantly encountered the Tartars, who were then the terror of the Chinese, as they were subsequently that of the civilised nations of the West, and drove them out of the country beyond the frontiers, into the steppes and wilds of Mongolia.

These Mongol Tartars, northern erratic tribes, wandering nations, 'Huen-hoo' or clamorous slaves, or 'Hoo-yin,' for by all these names they have been called at various times —were as intractable, as wild, and as great scourges to the Chinese of these and later days, as were the Caledonii and Mætæ to the Romans, or the Picts, Scots, and Attacotti to the Britons; figuring, as they do, in almost every page of Chinese history, because of the excesses they committed, and keeping the harmless inhabitants of the border provinces harassed and poor; while the unsettled population on the skirts of the frontier, driven from their homes, and plundered by these pastoral warriors, were obliged from necessity, or perhaps choice, to perpetrate all sorts of depredations to ward off starvation: for we all know that—

> 'Near a border frontier in the time of war,
> There 's ne'er a man but he 's a freebooter.'

The estimation in which the Mongols were held by the Chinese may be gleaned from the fact, that a general, who is immortalised for having invented hair-pencils, was despatched with 300,000 troops to reduce the Huen-hoo, and to expel them from the country; after which Hwangti caused all the large towns to be enclosed within walls, and to keep the invaders for ever beyond the boundary, and stop their disastrous incursions, he conceived the idea of extending and uniting the walls which the princes of the northern states *had before built to protect their kingdoms*, into one grand wall stretching around the land from the sea to the desert. The great barrier was begun and successfully completed in ten years; during which time, however,

Tche-hwangti had died; and his son, unable to repress the machinations of the feudal chiefs, who had again acquired strength, was deposed and supplanted by a soldier of fortune, who began the celebrated Han dynasty.

One account states that the realisation of the magnificent conception of Hwangti was accomplished in five years, by many millions of labourers, and that three men out of every ten were impressed for the task; others say that it cost 200,000 lives from exhaustion and fatigue. But the ten years is more probably nearer the truth, and the fact of its being continued and finished after the death of the originator, and the extinction of his family, goes far to prove 'that this mode of protecting the empire from the fierce savages commended itself to the nation at large, which joined heartily in it, and that this stupendous work was not forced out of the labour of unwilling subjects.'*

The fact of its being thrown over a vast natural barrier, by which an enormous amount of toil was required beyond that necessary had it been built on the plain, furnishes additional proof of the almost supernatural dread which influenced the builders, and the daring attributes with which they invested the predatory nomads. The latter would have laughed at a wall on the low country, when defended by unwarlike Chinese. Indeed, it is related that the Mantchus once entered China by the mountains on the east, 'having amused the numerous garrisons of the forts (on the Wall), by which alone the Chinese thought it possible to pass; then the Tartars left their tents and baggage over against the intrenchments (at the forts) as though they intended to force a passage through; but they secretly marched in the night over the hills, and surprised a city at the foot of them called Chang-ping chew.'†

Taking history, and the appearance of the strong line

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.*

† Father Gerbillon.

of circumvallation together, one is prompted to believe that the Great Wall of China is far more likely to have been the cherished desire of the people, than the odd fancy of a cruel king—a noble effort towards self-preservation rather than a monstrous freak of tyranny. Though it was impotent against such intrepid barbarians—the object being frustrated by craft on their part, and faction quarrels on that of the Chinese—the intention remains, and its realisation is unquestionably one of the wonders of the world.

We must not forget that the military Romans did not disdain the services to be derived from stone walls when fighting with savages, or striving to keep them within bounds. Agricola, about two hundred years after the Chinese had completed their huge rampart, threw up a chain of forts between the estuaries of the Forth and the Clyde, to check the indomitable Caledonians; which forts were afterwards renewed and connected with each other by a great bank of earth, under the superintendence of Lollius Urbicus. Also, the Emperor Hadrian found it incumbent on him to erect a monstrous fortification of towers and stone wall of seventy miles in length, between the Solway and the Tyne, as well as others on the threatened frontiers of Germany.

The Chinese wall was probably about as useful to the frightened Chinese as was the Roman wall to the helpless Britons; for when the eagles of the disciplined Roman legions had disappeared in haste to meet barbarian hordes at home, the perpetual surge that had been incessantly beating at its base, and sometimes, even with the hardy trained bands on the top, breaking over it, the torrent of Picts and Scots burst beyond it into the guarded territory.

'Throwing up hooks, they pulled the Britons down from the top of their wall, and slew them, and then passing the wall, they destroyed the cities and murdered the inhabitants.'

Nothing but the firmness and military prowess of the Romans could guard the southern division of Britain from the fiery invaders who rushed from their unconquered wilds; and this discipline and firmness the sons of Han did not seem to possess.

From the ninth year of the dynasty succeeding the Great Tsin, the Tartars again began to disturb the country, and to appease them—as the Roman governor of Britain, Virius Lupus, was obliged to buy over the turbulent tribes with gold—the daughters of the emperor were given in marriage to the Tartar kings. 'From this day,' writes the native recorder, 'China lost her honour and respectability, and the disgrace brought upon her was never greater.' The chief minister of state, through whose fears and wishes this detested measure was brought about, excused himself by saying that the Tartars were such barbarians it was impossible to reason with them; moreover, as they had no permanent habitations, it was extremely difficult to carry on war with them. They were here to-day, and a month hence hundreds of miles distant

And well the men of the middle kingdom might dread the almost invincible savages—who afterwards, as Mongols and Mantchus, ruled portions, and then the whole of the empire, and finding stone walls along an immense frontier inadequate for their protection, began trying these political blandishments. The invaders would have infused a good deal of awe into any nation had they murdered its king, and then made a drinking cup of his head, as it is written they served a Chinese monarch who had fallen into their hands.

I have experienced very different sensations of wonder and admiration, when endeavouring thus to follow out the aim and construction of the Ta-Tsin Wall, than would have been produced had I stood before those melancholy

evidences of despotism that yet stand exultingly over the ruins of Memphis—the unmeaning, I had almost said unsightly, Pyramids of Jizeh. Of the largest, Diodorus says, that the unremitting labour of 366,000 men was required for twenty years, before its apex was reared above the sandy plain; and Pliny stigmatises the whole as an idle and foolish ostentation of royal wealth. Chance, the latter historian adds, has most justly obliterated the remembrance of their various founders.

Even had I now before me that unmatchable ruin of antique regality and grandeur, the magnificent amphitheatre of Rome's best days—the Coliseum of Vespasian, I could not help reflecting that its magnificence and grandeur was wrung, in one year, out of the compulsory toil of 12,000 Jews and Christians; that its eighty stately arcades were designed to contain 100,000 spectators assembled to witness and gloat over cruelty in its most depraved and repulsive form; to see captives, slaves, and malefactors fighting and slaying each other in cold blood, for life or liberty, and for the gratification of the civilised Romans; men worried and torn by wild beasts, and the beasts hacked and mangled by the men: that its columned walls had echoed and re-echoed the applauding shouts, the 'Habets' of the excited and heartless audience, when prisoner after prisoner, criminal after criminal, or slave after slave, as might be—to whom, if not killed outright—life was yet dear, had fallen, covered with blood and wounds, before his victorious opponent, and his valueless panting body lay waiting for the finishing thrust or slash, while his fast glazing eyes wandered desperately through the haze of exhaustion towards the blood-thirsty people for the death-warrant or reprieve—the *pollicem premere*, or the *pollicem vertere*—the clenched hands and upright thumbs of mercy, or the fatal thumbs bent back in disapproval.

I might prefer this as a national and a more creditable

work, because built with nobler intentions, and devoted to a more patriotic purpose. The mighty maze of stone that constitutes the old barricade of China, though it does not boast of a trace of beauty—save that which accidentally belongs to its austerely uniform towers and parapet, and the wild sublimity of its situation—is doubtless preferable to the vast details and architectural magnificence that glorified the Roman shambles for two and a half centuries later date.

But I have lingered too long in my refuge among the wreck of bricks, bare slabs of rock, and ledges of crumbling rampart. The sun is getting higher and higher, and hurling down with momentarily increasing rage the intensest shower of burning rays I have yet been exposed to; and an urgent feeling of thirst has been rapidly gaining on the pleasurable and reflective senses since the heat became so great.

The scenery around has altered a good deal, too. The sea that had shone like a shield of polished steel or silver but a short while ago, now seems a dense sheet of talc, from which the junks have been swept: the golden sand is a ruddy blaze of flickering fire, almost too powerful for the shaded eyes. Every tint has changed; everything wears an altered appearance; and the far-off objects that I could clearly discern when I sat down barely an hour ago, are now leaping and quivering in a hazy tremor of scorching light.

Though late in the morning, there is not a single being of any description stirring in the plain below me. The silence and deathly stillness everywhere is quite mystifying when one thinks of the mobs of howling and worrying people that beset us last night.

Surely they cannot live eternally within those walls, and haunt for ever those regular rows of houses I can just see the roofs of in long lines intersecting each other, without coming out into the plain on either side. Shan-hai Kwan is there, like a desolate ghost-ridden house that has been to let for years, and which no creature will venture near. The

high road to, and the high road from it, stretch east and west for miles, and yet they are vacant by all save the beating rays. Never in daylight was such a large piece of cultivated country, with populous villages and a closely-packed town, occupied by an industrious lot of inhabitants, so wanting in life.

Up among the clouds to the north-west, north, and north-east, soar the tops of the granite hills in the quickening glare, treeless and verdureless — thick as pins stuck in a pin-cushion by a careless hand—and with all the multiform outlines of mountains composed of this igneous extrusion rising so majestically that they look as if they were curious stalactites hung or growing from the vault of heaven. It is only among them that one can discover

> 'The negligence of nature, wide and wild,
> Where undisguised by mimic art she spreads
> Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.'

I am on the most advanced of these monarchs of the world's agony. They extend from far beyond Peking, margining, as it were, what is called the Great Plain of China, with tall sierras of fine-grained, hard, and beautiful grey granite, with low knolls of compact semi-crystalline limestone, of a brownish-grey colour, exhibiting thin veins of quartz in its fracture, flanking these, with a deep cave in one or two places; and are chiefly remarkable for the great uniformity they have presented along the whole track, in running towards the road from the long range in spurs inclining from north-east to south-west. This may be said to be the narrowest portion of the rich alluvial plain which spreads out from this wall to the junction of the river Kan with the Yangtsz 'Kiang in Kiangsi, in latitude 30° north; * for the mountains separating China from Mongolia and Mantchuria here take a bend round to the eastward, and terminate in the peak on which this

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.*

tower is situated, about eight miles from the little headland that carries the Great Wall into the gulf.

In the most recent maps their height, at this part, is given as four or five thousand feet, but this is probably over-estimated, as my observations now only place the tower at 1,556 feet above the level of the town, and that cannot be more than 200 feet above the level of the sea. Immediately behind this, belonging, in fact, to the same mountain, is another peak about twenty feet higher than the tower, which looks almost as lofty as any of the others; so that at the very utmost none of the mountains in my vicinity can, I think, exceed 3,000 feet. To the eastward they seem to dwindle down in a very gradual manner, until lost in the fervent glitter; but to the north they spread away in limitless profusion, and over them bounds the ten thousand lí defence, with towers and brown stone wall, like a long narrow skiff with square sails rising and falling on the waves of a heavy sea.

Holding on by a thin ledge of rock, I can look below and mark the two ponies of our mandarin friends, no larger than two white dots, standing at the edge of the fir clump, which looks scarcely bigger than a gorse bush. M. and the prying officials are under its shelter, but I wave a handkerchief, nevertheless, to let them know that I have gained the summit; and then finish the bearings, and the measurement indicated by the instruments.

It is insufferably hot, and a mouthful of water would be worth any price. Looking about, I find a wet streak, scarcely more than damp, on the face of a piece of rock; this I carefully soak up for a few minutes with the end of my turban, and then keep the moist cloth in my lips to allay the horrid craving; but it tastes very bitter—for the stone was covered with a thin mossy coat—and does nothing to palliate the drought. My handkerchief is wrapped around my head as an extra protection, and the ends are allowed to

crop down and cover my temples and neck, but it does not mitigate the fierceness of the sun.

The way I ascended looks ten times more difficult for descent, and highly dangerous, as I can only employ one hand to cling with, the other being engaged in carrying the inconvenient barometer, which I must either leave behind, or carry and seek a more facile route to the rear of the mountain, from whence a gully or ravine may lead me out to the plain.

Deciding on the latter course, I began to move down as well as the harsh declivities and the care necessary to prevent a downfall—which would have been a most serious affair here, as I was alone—would allow me; but not before I had with, I hope, pardonable vanity, and the licence of a first explorer, scratched on the solid part of the tower wall in very transient lines, 'Staveley Peak,' as a landmark and a trace to any future venturer. The thin smooth soles of my boots glanced off the mossy slopes and ridges of the living rock, as if they had been planted on sheet ice, when I wound round on narrow crags, shelves, and hair's-breadth projections that would have bothered the sure eyesight and surer footfalls of the chamois—slipping, tripping, and recovering again, times without end, until about half way down, when greater difficulties presented themselves in the form of immense irregular masses of rock—clay iron-stone it appeared to be—strewn thickly about, as they had been split, hurled, and rifted in great flakes and blocks by the expansive force of the moisture imbibed during wet weather, and frozen much beyond its liquid bulk in the severe frosts of winter.

To get over these was both vexatious and injurious; they were sometimes so loose and disjointed, that no sooner had I put foot on what was to all appearance a trusty piece, than away it would slide, crashing over the smaller fragments, and throwing me ten or fifteen feet below; at other times,

the deep chasms between the sharp jagged edges would be treacherously filled up, and covered over by the wild vine or creeping weeds, like a masked *trou de loup*, so that before I could make up my mind whether to yield my weight to it or not—so headlong was my course at intervals, I was fairly trapped, and contused and shaken beyond all belief, until limbs, body, and brain were alike paralysed and jumbled about by the inavertible collisions. The stem of the vine, too, even where the descent was not bad, often proved a regular gin; for lying concealed from view in wily nooses, it inveigled toe or ankle into the mesh, and a heavy fall downwards was the consequence.

When I got to the bottom, which must, with the turnings and windings, and these bothering accidents, have been nearly two hours from the time I left the peak, the sun was above the mountain ridges, and a perfect globe of incandescent fire looked and felt as if but a few hundred yards above my head. Oh, how hot, how scorching, how heart-quickening and brain-melting was that forenoon sun at the Great Wall, on the eleventh of July! Had all the hot days I ever encountered; had all the fiery suns that ever beat upon my head, and struck their red-hot rays into my back, been collected into that narrow shadowless furnace, I could not have been more quickly conquered, more thoroughly overcome.

The feeble flutter that still moved in the air when I was on that tower, which now seemed hanging at an immeasurable elevation in the clouds of polished tin, had long since been excluded by the giant rim of vertical rocks that intervened between me and the plain; and the reflection—quintessence of the sun's furious power—from the naked crags on every side, had so driven out or so rarefied the lower atmosphere, that breathing became a series of convulsive gasps, executed with an agonising effort only less painful than the outrageous thirst I endured.

Resolutely I followed the ravine for about a quarter of a

mile, I think, climbing, jumping, and eagerly scrambling over the obstructive beds of *débris*, round to the eastward; and then, oh! how bitterly I was disappointed, when it ran to the left, to the north of the base of a scar cliff, instead of, as I had hoped, to the plain on the south! Like the starling of the Bastille, I was caged. I could not get out; not a single chance remained for me but to clamber up the nearest mountain as rapidly as possible, and escape from the unrelenting sun, that, like some foul fiend, crept more above and closer to me the less I felt able to resist it. A wild species of determination suddenly seized upon me, as I strained my eyes to measure the distance and the quickest way to the crest of the heaven-rending mountains. A mad desperation, mental and physical, urged me on to hurry recklessly over all kinds of obstacles, to struggle against precipitous walls of rock like a maniac, and to tear blindly upwards, as if for life, to that summit which I knew must overlook the plain, and which I frantically rebuked myself for ever losing sight of on such a fearfully dangerous day.

I can remember that I many times fell back from the unfriendly steep that denied me foothold or handhold; I also remember that I scaled the Great Wall where it in solitude bent over a deep fissure: that the stones felt like glowing coals, and that I wondered if the Chinese had reared it under such a liquifying sun, when I easily got down from the top of it. But I remember far better that, hand over hand, I got to the top of that weary mountain, with the perspiration running through my skin like water through a colander, stupefied and exhausted, with legs so tired that, though aching violently, they would not obey me further, and with feet cut and bruised through the rents and gashes in the flimsy boots.

Most appalling of all, the horrible sun had begun to affect me in an unusual and indescribable manner; for in spite of all my conscious attempts to suppress it, every inspiration I

made was accompanied by an involuntary jerking sigh, alarmingly loud. It sounded in my ears not unlike a hiccup, though far more distracting, and more resembling the deep sigh of grief, perhaps, than anything else of the kind; and with this, there was violent and tumultuous beating of the heart—its thumps dinning strangely and vehemently in the awful quiet of nature, as if it would break its way free; and there was the bursting throb of the carotid arteries, and the distended strain of the jugulars in the neck, as if I was being effectually strangled; with a faint blowing or ringing in the ears, like the sound of a far-distant railway-whistle. My eyes were so heavy that vision became an irksome task, but yet they were able enough to tell me that another dreadful range of precipices was in front, instead of the tree and crop-covered level I had striven for; and that another descent to a forbidding valley—it might be the valley of the shadow of death, it glared so repulsively and yawned so demoniacally in the full light of day—and another almost hopeless contention with sixteen hundred feet of upright stone, that stood a mocking partition between me and life, was an inevitable trial, if escape from such a den, such an inquisitorial torture-prison, was ever to be effected.

The terrifying stillness that haunted this perdulous spot was not among the least of my visitations, as I dropped down on the scraggy verge, imagining that a brief rest would lull or ameliorate the symptoms of exhaustion I laboured under. The total absence of everything animated, of everything that would stimulate one to exertion, to increased hopefulness, or even lend a transient gleam of life to the deathless solitude, and convince the desperate and all but despairing stranger that he was not entirely lopped off from the moving and sentient world, made the most sedative and dismal impression upon me.

Presently, however, a gorgeously-enamelled and emblazoned butterfly would lazily flaunt its gaudy figure past me—a

brilliant temptation which I could not have resisted at other times—and alight on some lichen-coloured stone near where I sat. Then a hawk or a falcon would poise itself on oscillating or fixed outstretched wing, as it scanned the crevices and corners where prey might be found; and anon a small bird's note would sound sweetly, but sorrowfully low, far up some lone valley. Even these were companionable and enlivening, and for the moment I felt thankful; but more gratefully did I hail a thready streak of water that just oozed from a mossy filter, like a black line down a brown splinter, within a few yards of me. The turban was rolled and steeped in it until it was almost swabbed dry, and then wrapped around my brow, with the end in my mouth. This served me as a reservoir for a very limited period; and though dreadfully bitter the tepid water tasted, it moistened my parched mouth until I had made another essay at the life or death struggle; for there was now no shirking the unwelcome thought that I had lost my way, and that, if I by a miracle managed to evade sunstroke or a broken neck, hunger and weakness would be a slower but no less malignant antagonist.

Every twenty or thirty yards forced me to rest on some projection, or hang on by my hands while I rallied for some seconds; and the most wonderful escapes from falls over perpendicular cliffs were matters of ordinary occurrence, before I found myself in a circular caldron-like dell, which the blazing sun above seemed to enclose from the world without, as it lay over its mouth like a Titanic dish-cover of burnished metal. The vertical fire struck through me as lightning would have done, in that amphitheatre in which nothing vital but salamanders could live; the invisible elastic air felt like a Dead Sea of molten lead—the place was a pandemonium of vivid incendiarism. Pluto might have revelled in the congenial element with his court, where everything seemed molten but the obdurate rocks.

To reach the foot of the mountain that I had purposed

climbing, was beyond my strength. A vague notion that shelter from the sun was the *summum bonum* of existence, and all that I must now seek for, took hold upon me; but through the glare and blaze of midday, when the undeviating luminary, in the glory of meridian, forbade the most trifling object its attendant shadow of other hours, I could see nothing but a group of shrubby bushes growing in an angular nook; and to them I staggered, giddy as a man inebriated, with that awful sense of bursting and throbbing from heart to brain, that mysterious sighing that would not cease, and the accompanying darkness and tintinnabulary ringing becoming more and more overwhelming.

Once or twice, I think, I fell; but recollection, as well as vision, became obscure. At last I reached the last hope—the only balm now left in Gilead: the miserable stunted handful of scrub seemed a heaven-endowed forest—a sanctuary and a refuge. 'Better a wee bush than nae bield,' says the Scottish proverb, and never did it receive such a verification before. As I sank through the thin foliage, which was hardly broad enough to cover my head and breast, I felt water trickling about my shoulders with inexpressible coolness, and soon it flowed around my face and splitting head. I had been guided to a spring of the tiniest dimensions; and yet, oh! how delicious was its little musical tinkle, and its merciful temperature, in that fairy pool—scarcely wider than two hands-breadths—as I immersed face and mouth in it, and almost drained it.

There was a renewal of life for a few moments; the weak bushes that grew on the only crumb of soil I had seen since early morning, and that sheltered so cunningly my fountain of a thousand blessings, my unexpected preserver, threw off the hotter rays, and allowed me to breathe a little freer. For a very short time I lay comparatively easy in this paradise; for

> 'It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile
> Even in the lap of horror.'

But there was so much confusion in my head, such an incongruous mingling of ideas of the oddest description, that memory does not serve me much further. A dark curtain appeared to be drawn over everything; a stinging pain shot through my temples at times; and I felt as if the destroying angel Azrael hovered above me. The daughter of night and sleep had come to woo me lovingly; the distaff had been laid aside; the wheel was about to cease rotating; and the black-robed Atropos, whose trenchant fangs were those everlasting peaks that stood in grim grandeur around me, appeared to draw near with the dreaded scissors to divide my scanty thread of life.

I know not, nor can I guess, how long I lay thus; but it could not have been above an hour, as the sun had scarcely, to my thinking, stirred, and burned with its effulgent lustre as wildly as ever. I was conscious enough to appreciate the full danger of my situation, and the many chances I had to combat with before the evening should relieve me of my implacable enemy. Thanks to the perpetual drip, drip of the water on my head, and the complete soaking of every part of my body in the petty flood, I had got rid of the most urgent and prostrating symptoms, and could gather wits enough to reason on what was best to be done; for make one more dash at freedom I must, as my legs and feet, stuck all this time beyond the bushes, were almost broiled and benumbed, and the wounds ached very much—to such a degree, in fact, that I doubted if I could stand at all.

When I thought of the mistake I had made in not leaving the troublesome instruments at the tower, and arriving where I had parted from M. by the known path I had scaled, instead of losing my way, and them, too, in some forgotten place, and getting the hard knocks of rocks and sun, with starvation and excessive weakness to the bargain, I was madly chagrined; and the ever-recurring idea of dying in such a wilderness, hemmed in by untrodden hills, on which

I had not seen the minutest trace of a human being having ever been among them, was, I thought, intolerable. There was little certainty of one's body being disturbed, when I calculated the miles and miles that I must have travelled, up and down valleys and over arduous hills, into this utterly forsaken place—where searchers, if bold enough to seek so far, would pause long before they came to the conclusion that I might be here. I thought, too, how I had neglected the advice given by the mandarins as to there being no roads, and the heat of the weather. Whenever I fancied the exultation and arrogance they would undoubtedly indulge in, and the unfavourable light a fatal termination of my disregard of their counsels would place foreigners, I was pressed on by a decided determination not to give in. I would not forsake hope so long as I could move, though it seemed as if I could never again rise ten feet up an ascent unaided. Then my companion, what could he be doing all this time? Surely he must have surmised what had happened, from my many hours' absence, and done something in the way of getting the country people to examine about the hills! It is singular that I was then more uneasy on his account than on my own; and at the dilemma I had got him into such a weary way from Tien-tsin; and how he would be able to act in it. The agony of mind I suffered was truly excruciating, and half hoping, half despairing, I sought to drive it away by action.

The weak rushing din of a remote stream had caught my attention more than once since I recovered my senses, for the ringing and deafness I had felt before going to sleep had blunted every sound, and I reasonably concluded that if I could only track it out it would conduct me to the outside of the barrier by some easy passage—once there, I was safe. Unfortunately, I had lost my cap and handkerchief, and almost everything but a note-book, out of my pockets. I daresay I had thrown them away. Indeed, I am not quite

certain if, in that awful sun delirium, I was not walking with my cap in my hand; and the only article remaining was the long cotton scarf I had worn as a turban outside the cap, and which I now found on my shoulders.

Once more a quantity of the grand elixir was imbibed, and, with the new fashioned head-dress wringing wet, I resolutely set off to hunt up the prospective stream. Heavens and earth, how hot it was when I got again among the angry black rocks: every one of those I touched might have answered admirably for an over, rather than an under-heated gridiron! An atmosphere fit to breathe there was none; but there was an aerial substitute of diabolical flame drawn in with every inspiration, that felt as if dissolving and volatilising every atom of fibre—every drop of blood.

Undergoing much torture from my damaged feet, but, worst of all, a sprained ankle, I managed to hobble and crawl for about a quarter of a mile to the eastward, gasping like a stranded fish, and steaming and perspiring like a race-horse after the race, and nobly faced a low fragment of cliff that had been separated and thrown down from the mountain side, until I had got a short way from the river. Alas! it, too, was one of my disappointments in China; a picture of so many things met with daily. It was perversely running the wrong way—against nature, and against reason, it splashed and rioted away among the crooked passages to the west, skipping idly over its rock-strewn bed with aggravating liberty and ease. The strong desire to drink, roll, and lave in it could not be gratified, owing to the space between us being jammed up with surly blocks and flakes, quite enough to prevent any prospect of ever getting away from them, if once I trusted myself inside—I was so done up, so cramped, and so unhinged. Yet, like a caged lion, I was determined to bounce and spring at the unyielding bars until the last.

Turning away from the tantalising stream, whose echoing

babble had derisively lured me so far, I dragged on to the eastern peaks, again to wage a contest with them from, as it seemed, the bowels of the earth. Nerved to the utmost limit of desperation, a few hundred feet of seemingly interminable intermural ascent was won at an almost superhuman effort of strength and mind, and a sudden circle round the mountain brought me into a more favourable position for shelter; because the laminar nature of the overlaying stone that imposed itself on the granite was more irregular and disrupted than any I had met before, and was heaved up into all sorts of caves, and niches, and columns, gladly provocative of rest in case of need. An abrupt twist round a corner, demanded by the violent divergence of a great angular projection, showed me, about five hundred feet higher, a tower of the great wall, on the crest of the very cliff I was toiling on, which I knew, from the view I had obtained in the morning, must overlook the country below. Another hour's holding out, and I must be there.

Merciful powers! how closely I hugged and fought with that iron-hearted precipice; and with what a distracting sense of destitution did I gripe and clutch at every tuft of weeds—every point, chip, and crumb of stone that lay about, to support or aid me on! And what a feeling of maddening despondency took possession of me, as a fragile or fretted hand or foot-purchase deceitfully gave way when depending on it, and I was launched back again many yards!

The scorching influences again begun to play their part, after too short a respite, and I was attacked with the old dreadful sensations more virulently than ever. To maintain the struggle until the tower was reached, I could not, with the fiery sunbeams enveloping me as with an atmosphere of flame, making the soul sick, and the brain quiver. A few yards to the right, I noticed a cave. It lay between two tall ledges that formed its sides and back; with a massive splinter which had toppled from above, and been

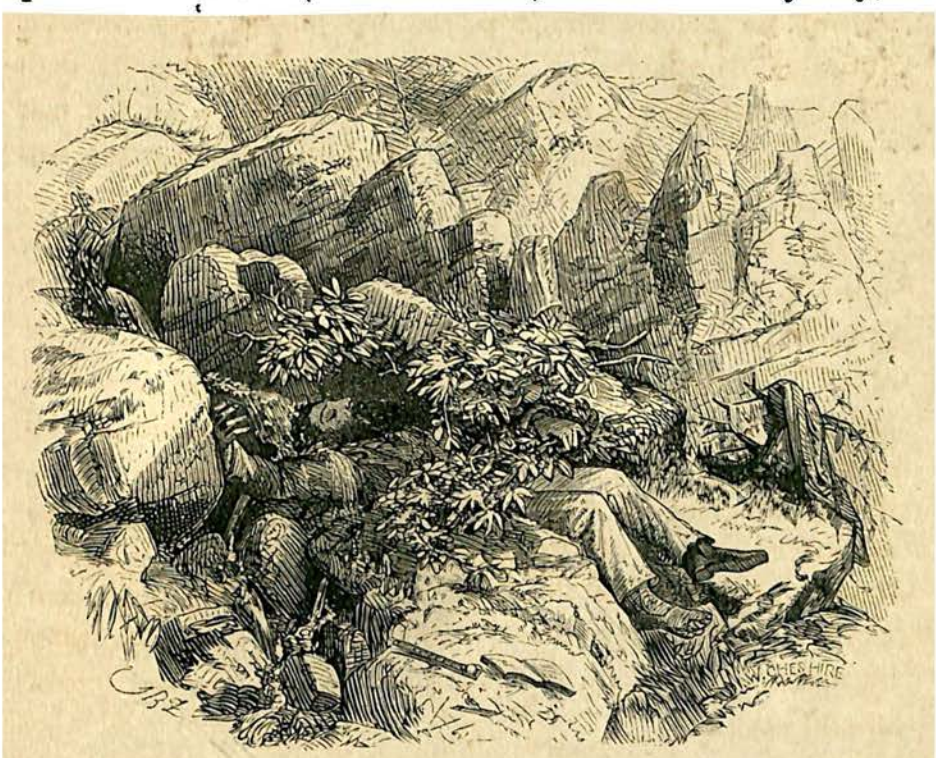
stopped in its course by the inequalities around, to form an impenetrable roof over a cascade that came welling from the dark interior in a feathery jet. For this I hastened with unutterable anxiety to avoid total annihilation by the heat. At nearly every stride a rest was demanded—not to recover consciousness or strength, which were fast giving in—but to relax the cramped muscles of my legs, now so acutely painful and almost useless. These intermissive struggles lasted for a long time, and the den seemed ever receding from me, until I had fairly thrown myself into its deep shade, so overcome and prostrated by the day's conflict that something kept telling me I had finished, and that this was the end.

The last thing I did was to throw my coat on a little upright block at the mouth of this chamber of grey rock, to attract the attention of any men who might be sent in quest of me. A little sloping trough, very jagged, and very shallow, received the thin spout of water from the step above, and conveyed it to the almost subterranean gutter among the crags below. Into this I plunged at once, and with the dark deep shadow of the rock overhead, and the icy chill of the benignant cascade fluttering about face and temples, and soothing the boiling brain, I fell into a lethargic state. Incapable of thought, like another Alastor, I passed into a blissful sleep—

> 'Lone as incarnate death
> On the smooth brink of that obscurest chasm.'

It was late in the afternoon when I awoke with a fright from some incoherent and fantastic dream of monstrous incongruities, to the somewhat romantic and startling, but by no manner of means pleasant realities of the natural hydropathic establishment I had so opportunely discovered. For some minutes I lay completely at a loss what to think of the strange adventure. Why had I been transported to this

wizard-like retreat, and how could it have happened that I should be nearly afloat in a sitting posture in a dam of water, with a perpetual fountain gushing and spluttering but a few inches above my heated cranium, and laving and titillating me so agreeably. Surely the age of magic, sorcery, and incantations had gone by, and Aladdin lamps, rings, and charms had all been worn out since my nursery days had expired. For the life of me I could not fathom the mystery,



Sleeping in a Spring.

nor believe that I was not yet in the embarrassing and hair-moving crisis of a nightmare dream. I felt like one contending with a gloomy phantasm, from which he endeavours to escape, though aware of its character: so dull and torpid were my faculties. But they gained their natural elasticity with a thrill, when I tried to raise myself from the watery depths, and was assailed by a host of unpleasant sensations, ranging from the toes upwards; the principal of which, such

as stiffnesses, cramps, numbness, and dull and shooting pains, were more than sufficient to convince me of my mortal state. Then the whole of the day's adventures thronged thick upon me, and so wonderful did they seem that I could scarcely believe in them—so confused had my thoughts become.

All around was as still as the grave; yet I listened with strained attention for the approach of investigators headed, as I felt sure they must be, by M., and, as minute after minute rolled by, became grievously annoyed that he had not come to my help. Before the night set in I felt assured that some one must find a clue to my hiding-place, and bring me succour of some description; for, physically, I was incapable of putting a foot to the ground. My brain was still whirling and throbbing, and there was a sickness and lack of energy about the heart that forbade exertion for some time to come. I must have swallowed an enormous quantity of the contents of this crystal well before my parching thirst had abated, and a welcome relief the voracious draught afforded; for I dropped off into a hazy slumber, lulled and refreshed by the most delicate of shower baths.

Oh! those grateful feasts and festivals of the old Romans! those glorious and sanctified Fontinalia on the thirteenth of October, when the chaste nymphs of wells and fountains—fair maids with rush-bound locks, elegant conceptions of grace, sweetness, and amiability—were dutifully honoured and worshipped by the religious devotees who had shared their favours throughout the year; and presented for acceptance with the loveliest and most fragrant of all the gifts that Mother Earth can yield; with the loveknots and nosegays, wreaths and coverlets of flowers, culled from the brightest and most fragrant spots! How ardently do I at this moment wish that those twin preservers of life, to whom, through a kind Providence, I owe existence, and regard more fondly than, perhaps, ever did a son of Rome his mossy repository of *Aqua*

fontana—but which are now lost for ever in those trackless chasms and tortive mountain walls of Mantchuria—were brought within the ken of man, and tended with that respect and affection their presiding deities deserve.

One almost feels as if a pilgrimage to the most remote verge of Cathay with the dutiful love-offering of flowers to the sweet-handed goddess of these prattling rock-bound founts would be but doing justice to one's conscience. Nevertheless, if such be necessary, let the distant pilgrimage be on a favourable day, and not in the zenith of sun and summer.

Suddenly a long, clear whistle echoed and re-echoed from slab to crag, and from crag to cliff, breaking the muteness of the weird solitude, and infusing hope into an almost hopeless mind. 'Joy! joy!' I cried, 'at last they are there, for that is M.'s call. I am safe!'

I roused up, and shouted and bawled until I could make no more noise; then fell back exhausted. The whistle, unvaried in compass or strength, was continued monotonously, until I was compelled to believe that it was but the warbling of some lonely bird in the coolness of the evening; and felt vexed. Two or three times I heard a rustling murmur, as if somebody was trundling loose stones down the mountains a little way off, in his descent towards me; but no one came. It was only the evening wind brushing through a couple of dried-up bushes near the cave.

But these trifling indications of life and motion were not lost upon me. I fairly got up to test my utmost abilities to move into the daylight. Thank heaven! the flaring, blinding, and grilling beams of the rather too glorious orb were transferred to some other region of *coups de soleil* and frost-bite; and with the exception of some confusion, vertigo, and stinging darts, my head did not seem so much the worse as I had expected to find it. Creeping to the aperture of my cell, the scene was found to be entirely changed from what I had conceived it to be. Instead of the infernal white heat, the

untouchable stones, and the *aqua fortis* atmosphere, there was a comparative Eden; though

> 'On every side now rose
> Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
> Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
> In the light of evening'—

to bar the footsteps of the intruder. There was a silky breeze that would scarcely have altered the course of a falling rain-drop, it waved so finely, but oh! so gently soothing.

I felt a new-created being, though in honest truth I badly wanted repairs. Then there was the Great Wall tower, standing with its grim visage hundreds of feet above me, as if it overhung the world. That was the height of my ambition, and might be achieved before dark. There was plenty of time, for the sun's slanting beams yet rose lively enough above the westerly peaks. The gnawing effects of nearly twenty-four hours' fasting began now to press unpleasantly, and they alone were ample to stir me to action.

Not without much pain did I get rid of the remains of the boots from my swollen feet, as progression in them was out of the question, and my almost naked toes, though much hurt, and all but dislocated, were far safer in that state on the slippery sheets of rock I had to cross than under the ragged leather. The out-lying coat was drenched in the pool, and tied about my crown and neck to keep up the refrigerating process. In such circumstances one is obliged to be one's own medical adviser, and I was apprehensive of a relapse of the heart-beating, sighing, and disturbed cerebral symptoms, as I issued from the primitive hospital with many hearty benisons in my breast and on my tongue, for its salvatory goodness to, perhaps, the first mortal who had ever faintingly sought its precincts, or reclined—

> 'Lulled by the fountain in the summer tide.'

I then thought that if ever fate should carry me within

hundreds of miles of the possibility of such a thing being realised—

> I'll build a pleasure house upon this spot,
> And a small arbour made for rural joy;
> 'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
> And place of love for damsels coy.'

And

> 'A cunning artist will I have to frame.
> A basin for that fountain in the dell.'

This was wild speculation, and the stern business of grovelling at a snail's pace up towards Cloudland shattered all other thoughts, and necessitated a calm survey of both ends of mortality, in favour of which, life or death, the chances were now about equal. Carefully, tenderly, and slowly, without once looking up, I went on, glad that I was retrieving something towards an escape from that saturnine crater—that midday volcano—than which—

> 'The sun on drearier hollow never shone.'

Long and wearily appeared every yard, for a hundred feet were more tedious and difficult to be got over than a thousand would have been at other times. Another range of peaks beyond this, and the hunt was up; I should have no longer power to move, and might as well resign myself quietly to the impending finish, when a myriad of ecstatic raptures flooded reason, and almost carried me headlong over the thin-edged ridge.

There was the plain lying before me far below, wearing the sober beauties of a magnificent sunset, but as petrified in its life as when I last looked on it so early in the morning. The Crusader's first view of Jerusalem, the travel-weary pilgrim's first peep of Mecca, or the exile's earliest glimpse of his native shore, could not compare with the joy I experienced as I scrutinised every morsel of the declivity, and

traced out each path and village for signs of movement. But no; all that bore the quickening impulse was the fresh breeze from the gulf, and the tags of weeds waving their blasted leaves and heads listlessly from it.

I was free! and though many many hundreds of feet of almost sheer descent had yet to be accomplished, I was out of the pit, and for very gladness would have hugged and squeezed the square hard-featured old tower that had so generously served me as a finger-post in that never-to-be-effaced moment, and would have scaled its battlemented crown, and exultingly waved my wet coat as a signal of triumph, had I not been so leg weary and spirit worn.

Halting but a few minutes to recruit from this tardy and desperately fought resurrection, and more and more perplexed at the non-appearance of friends or mandarins, I began to glide down the weather-beaten mountain, which stands a good deal more to the north than the one I had ascended in the morning. Meeting with the dry bed of a torrent, I had plain sailing for a long way over the boulders and water-worn stones, sledging down on a flag or block whenever I could.

Once only on the passage I came across a wild raspberry-bush with but a few berries on its delicate twigs, and lost no time in stripping it of the unripe but luscious fruit, which tasted like the essence of everything grandly nutritive.

When near the foot, I heard with unqualified delight the voices of men during one of my long pauses, and was sharply made aware of their whereabouts and vocation, as they sung and talked in a very loud key, while they cut the scanty grass and weeds from the sides and bottom of a scraggy valley.

Now I was in the land of the living, and might consider myself as quite rescued; for these hardy countrymen could not refuse to do what was needful, even though I was a stranger, and would readily assist me in getting to the town.

For the purpose of asking them I turned off my course, and got quite near before they noticed me.

Good gracious! what a shout of terror they gave when a big stone, uptorn by my weight, went thundering by them, and caused them to look up smartly to see from whence it

The Genii of the Mountain.

came. There were only six, and four of these threw down their reaping hooks and fled, bawling stertorously as they leaped and tumbled over the irregular ground. Had their national dragon suddenly alighted in the grass they were mowing, they could not have exhibited greater fear and consternation.

One old man stood stockstill and speechless, unable to move his eyes from the dreadful apparition; but the other, a strong young fellow, with his head wrapped in a blue turban, hooted and howled as he brandished a long knife in one hand, and his implement of husbandry in the other,

loudly commanding me to go back — to go quickly back to the mountains again!

This was another strange turn of affairs; no sooner escaped from a rather fierce frying-pan, than I am to be immolated by a fiery native. Certainly these romantic adventures were crowding rather quickly into one day's catalogue to be kindly appreciated; and, though it might make a thrilling finale to the exciting tale of a day at the Great Wall to wind up by a throat-cutting scene, yet for the Chinaman's sake, and the matter of conscience troubling him afterwards, I was loath that he should commit murder, after the maltreatment I had already received from his sterile mountains and treacherous sun.

I sat down and beckoned him to me, telling him who I was, and where I had been as well as I could; but for a minute or so he vociferated more loudly and tried to look more menacing, until I remembered the unearthly guise I was in, and the scarecrowish head-dress I wore. In a moment these were regulated or removed, and I must have appeared somewhat less like a bogle or a warlock, for he then commenced to advance carefully, making sure of a good line of retreat, however, and keeping an eye on his old friend behind, who had got out of his cataleptic seizure, and supported the fighting man with great courage and tact.

A few words, signs, and gestures made us friends; the Damoclean whittle was returned to a more fitting and congenial sheath than it could have found in my contused body, and the reaping hooks were agreeably reversed and laid down on the bloodless grass; while the valorous youth escorted me to a village we had passed in the morning, near the clump of firs to which my companion had resorted with the mandarins when I began the heavy day's work.

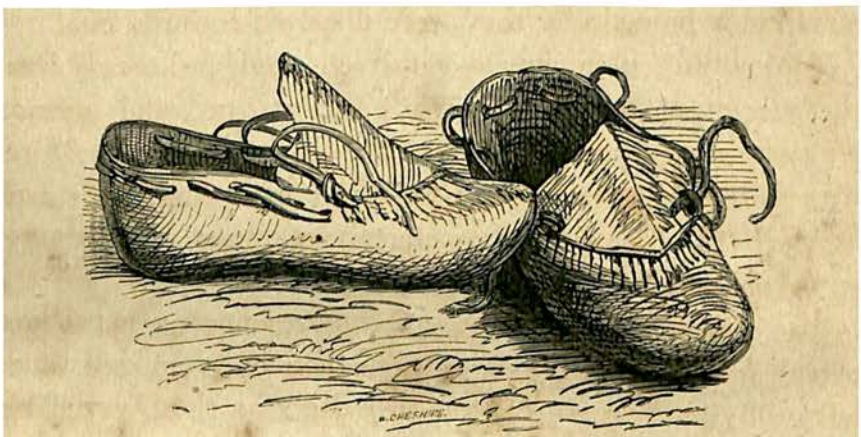
Just as I stopped at one of the cottages to obtain a drink

of water and wait the despatch of a messenger to M., I chanced to glance at this little grove, and was rather astonished to see one of two men mount a pony in hot haste and ride off in the direction of the town. As soon as I had imbibed such a quantity of water as made the old fellow who fetched it stare, I made towards the remaining messenger or spy, intending to have sent him to the inn with tidings of my arrival in the lower world, and with a request that a cart be sent for me—as walking some two or three miles was rather impracticable considering I had no boots, and was nearly *minus* toes and shins; but the strange fellow was mounted and away at a brisk trot before I got near; so I had to hire one of the villagers, who made such good use of his legs, that he overtook the hurried equestrian and gave him the note.

Meanwhile I reclined under the pleasant firs, and thought how much I would have given for their deep umbrage four or five hours before, when faltering under those agonising symptoms—more racking a hundred-fold than those which precede insensibility in drowning, and reflected what a stiff job I had to get out of danger on those glib escarpments, shadeless pits, and horrid chasms. I soon had a group of villagers of all ages around me, and in the distance, at every door or garden wall, the little round faces of the, as inquisitive, but more bashful, dear creatures peered out. The old men sat down and smoked, and made their remarks, while the juniors stood outside the circle, and all were remarkably civil—even polite, in their way. Numbers of questions were asked by them, but I fear my very slight knowledge of their language and dialect did not go far to enlighten them on the subjects they were so anxious to learn something; still, however, we managed to maintain an animated conversation, in the which my desperate ascent of the 'bad' or difficult mountains, and the ruinous condition of my travelling-suit, furnished no small item. I was given to understand that they never by any

means attempt to go beyond a certain height, and that their shoes even then are always spoiled by the stones.

These people were the first Chinese, by the by, I had seen wearing leather shoes in China, though farther in Mantchuria we met them frequently in use. They were made of the brown soft leather I had seen prepared at Tien-tsin, where the hides, after being steeped until the hair is easily removed, are smoked or cured over the wide flue



Tartar Shoes.

of a low furnace in the open air; the tanner manipulating the pelt over the cloud of dense smoke which rises from the burning straw introduced below, so that every portion is equally permeated by the preservative ingredients given out from the smothered combustion, and the operation of tanning, as thus practised, requires but a few hours in the Chinaman's hands; but the material is soft and thin and cannot stand wear well. In shape they were not unlike the Roman sandal or *caliga*, and each was formed of the one piece of skin moulded to the desired form when soft, and, without any additional sole but the smooth surface of the leather, which, rising above the heel, the sides of the foot and the instep, was drawn into puckers around the mouth by a thong, and furnished with a tongue or lip of more pliable stuff to cover the front of the foot.

On my enquiring their name for the Great Wall, they gave me a local appellation of wonderful import, and then asked if the English had a great *myriad li* wall, manifesting some surprise when told that we did not require such a fabric; and so on with other matters. They were a strong healthy contented lot of people, fair specimens of the, I should think, finest peasantry in the world. Though they had never before seen the face of a foreigner it was very remarkable how kindly they were disposed towards me.

Two chubby little boys—ruddy cheeked and manly little chaps—sought to fraternise with me at once, and brought me basin after basin of water — for I was 'Danish or Dutch with thirst' in earnest—and gathered me bouquets of wild flowers, while the old men eagerly enquired if I wanted anything to eat.

The fan inscribing was a great amusement when I happened to pull out my note-book—the only thing, I think, left in my pockets—and began to write with the 'everlasting pencil.' But the interesting *tête-à-tête* was happily broken by the arrival of M. in our stiff chariot, bumping along at a spanking pace over the untutored path, and the *rencontre* was a most satisfactory one for both of us, as a world of anxiety and trouble was at that moment thrown to the winds. Interchanging adieus with my simple-hearted entertainers, who had made themselves so affable, we mounted the churning machine and sped off to the town. A few words sufficed to account for my absence, and the non-appearance of M.

He had waited until nearly the middle of the day at the halting-place among the trees with the two officers sent to keep a watch on us, one of whom turned out to be a first-rate good-humoured fellow, who had collected about a dozen words of English from some of our naval people when they were surveying on the coast, where he was commandant of a seaward town, and they used to visit him—which words he

was very proud of showing off on all occasions, and this made him friendly and confident.

Finding I did not return in a reasonable time, my companion became so apprehensive of an accident having befallen me, that he attempted the ascent of the mountains, followed, but for a very little way, by the two fat warriors, whose plethoric condition did not give them any great advantage in climbing. He could only reach half way, when the sun drove him back, and then, with the mandarins, he returned to Shan-hai Kwan to procure assistance from the authorities in searching me out.

In this Ma-foo was prime mover, for he started off at once to some high personage, obtained twelve men, and, regardless of age and infirmities, accompanied them as a volunteer, gallantly leading the way. But he was not long in returning with bad tidings, of course; as his party could not have waddled more than half way to the peak, and the exertion was sure to throw the poor fellow into a desponding turn of mind. M. gave me up as lost as the hours flew by, and made every preparation for the worst, getting fifty men from the commandant of the garrison, who were sent off to trace my steps, but who, in all probability, never got any farther than the first—for the Chinese have an antipathy to clambering up these nearly inaccessible rocks—and came back without a word of tidings. He was just about organising another search, to be superintended by himself, and was bent on despatching our factotum back to Tien-tsin with the bad news, when my note reached him.

His anxiety must have been greater than mine; for at such a distance from Europeans, in a town where foreigners had never appeared before—at least in foreign costume, and among a people whose friendly countenance was matter for doubt—he would have spent a most wretched time alone, until somebody from that place had come to aid him, had I not returned.

A close surveillance had been kept up all day by the jealous magistrates, and two spies were seated in the outer room of our quarters at the inn when we entered. Ravenously I satisfied the hunger that had so tightly wrung me for hours, by an extraordinary onslaught on the mutton-chops promptly prepared by Ma-foo—whose old parchment countenance was pinched into acute smiles at the prospect of our journey being renewed without further trouble—and drinking a shameful quantity of sherry, with oceans of water.

Just as I had come in—without washing my face, or changing my clothes, so sleepy and fatigued did I feel—I threw myself on the hard kang, and almost before my head had touched the cáne mat, was off into a profound slumber—so profound that I did not hear the jabber and row of some more of the passport gentry, who wished another copy of Tsung's paper, without which, they said, we would not be allowed to leave in the morning. I think M. held out against this trifling with, or ignoring of, the legalised passport, and wished them again to say if it was inert and void; but they were guarded enough.

CHAPTER XIX.

ACCOMMODATION GRATIS — LEAVING THE CITY — CHINESE CIVILITY — GOOD-BYE TO THE HILL-SEA-BARRIER — THE PUNISHMENT OF THE CANGUE — THE COREANS, JAPANESE, AND CHINESE — OUR CONSORT — BEYOND THE GREAT WALL—COAST LINE OF DEFENCE AND ITS PROBABLE HISTORY — GRAND VIEW OF THE WALL — FATHER VERBIEST — HUNTING WITH HAWK AND HOUND — HUN-CHOW — A TARTAR CARAVANSARY — RUSTIC THEATRES — ROADSIDE COMPANIONS — THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH — THE SHOEING SMITH AND FARRIER.

WHEN the day broke next morning, we were up and preparing to depart from the dirty rooms and the mandarinish town of the Great Wall. Innumerable damages, over and above those felt yesterday, made themselves troublesome, and much in the way, and my head still swam a little and ached; but my eyes were the most painful, and fiery hot from the inflaming glare of the rocks. Otherwise, there was nothing serious to remind me of the exposure and buffeting about that had formed such a prominent episode in our quiet trip, and I relied on the excitement and exercise of a day beyond the Wall to put me on the high road to convalescence.

As we were ready to set off, and one of the spies in waiting had already started on his mission to inform the magnates of our intentions, the bill was sent for, and we fully expected to have something tremendous, if the charges were to be in proportion to the attentions we had received; but an answer came that there was nothing to pay but homage, for that the inn was a mandarins', kept up by government for the convenience of these worthies when travelling to and from Mantchuria; and all that was expected from us as we left was a formal obeisance to the absent son of heaven.

Certainly a very moderate demand for such villanous and miserly accommodation, which reflected no great amount of credit on the Emperor's generosity to his servants, nor on the management of the home department.

When passing out of the main courtyard, I could not help glancing towards the building where the comptrollers of the imperial household held out so manfully two nights before; and there, sure enough, I saw the finikin, pot-bellied little man of many terrors, the grinning man who delighted in dilemmas when he knew he was safe from peril, the young bucks who smirked and swaggered from the inner room, and all the other members of the establishment who had suffered, more or less, from fright or confusion of mind, looking out from doors and windows with evident glee.

In the streets a greater crowd tossed and tumbled about, and a stronger body of *un*-civil servants had to perpetuate the blessings of peace by unmerited castigation, than awaited us yesterday; but we steered in tranquillity through them until the military guard-house was neared, when we found the same decent display of clean well-dressed officials standing in the way, and the old blue-button on the steps beckoning us in. We dismounted, and our ponies were held by ready attendants, while the operation of real hand-shaking—which the fat 'English' gentleman, I suppose, had told them was the proper thing to do—was gone through, and the cementing beverage was handed round within doors.

The thumb was in great request in the conversation that ensued, and the gesticulations particularly affecting and comical by turns, as the proceedings of yesterday were reviewed and commented on. The Bluebutton was one of those who made sure I would return all right from the stony mountains—'woo-shi' and 'I canna be fashed thinking otherwise' flashed through one's mind on this declaration; but as he had been instrumental in sending out the impotent searchers to the foot of the mountains on both occasions, and seemed

lavishly gratulatory on our good luck in getting back, he was impressively thanked for his kindness to us unworthy strangers, and regrets were expressed that we could not show our appreciation of his supreme regard in any other way than by words.

This put him in a lively state of body, if not of mind, for he struck his breast as if about to displace his sternum and fracture all his ribs. He then grasped at something there, which we were to understand was his heart, and which after a tearing struggle he proffered to us with the fiercest self-abnegation. All he possessed was ours; but surely we would return again and dine with him? No! Then his sorrow is so bitter that he must cry; and he actually went through the motions and expressions of sorrow very cleverly, wiping his eyes with a closely folded pad of dusky cotton stuff, which he drew from the long sleeve of his coat, and throwing himself into a loud fit of superficial emotion. But would we show him Tsung's passport again to read — only for a minute, and we would get it back?

There was no understanding this excessive desire to be continually handling, and reading, and copying the Tien-tsin Commissioner's useful favour; for, to speak candidly, it was childish and supererogative to a most exalted degree, and inexcusable on any pretence; but as he had admitted the validity of the proper documents, there could be no great harm in letting him have a farewell peep after the amusement he had afforded us. A pair of goggling spectacles of large dimensions were adjusted on the nose, after a pinch of snuff; a very grave look was suddenly assumed, and he read the paper for the second time with a good deal of byeplay which seemed to take well; then it was given over to be again copied, more for the sake of display and manufacturing business, it struck us, than anything else. A little more talk followed, in which we were surprised to be informed that he was a Chinaman, and not a Tartar, as we had sup-

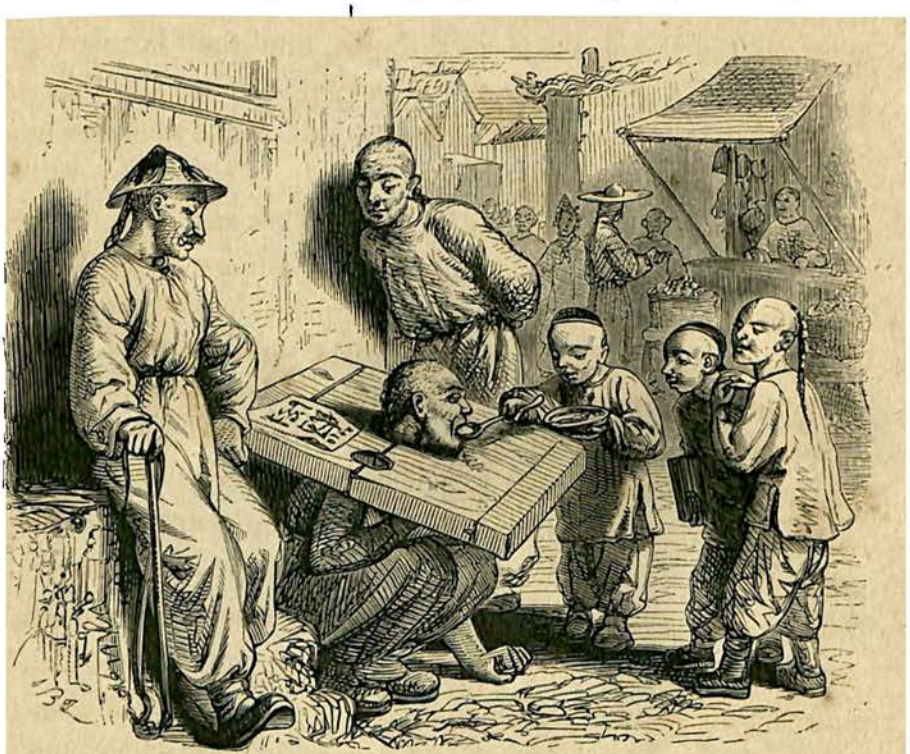
posed; and that he knew the capital of Mantchuria by its geographical or Mantchu name of Moukden,—being the only man we met on the long ride who did so, and then the audience was finished with another round of strong scented snuff.

When we had once more shaken the long-fingered and long-nailed hands, the big man of a dozen words, who had all along been very jocose, got up and said with strongly marked emphasis, 'Go?—good-bye!' at which great effort he laughed immoderately. It sounded strange, and not unpleasant, to hear a mandarin at the Great Wall use such words, and with some degree of pride too. They all followed us to the street, and in another minute we were out of their sight. The police cleared away the crowd until we were in a busy suburb outside the east gate, where numbers of men and boys were fishing with rods in the wall moat; the sides of the street lined with stirring little shops and stalls, containing all the animal and vegetable necessaries of Chinese life, and a stroke of trade driving on, rather unexpected after the sepulchral look the place bore from the hills; and then they too fell behind.

We noticed a melancholy-looking fellow seated on the border of the active thoroughfare undergoing the punishment of the cangue—a public exhibition much more fatiguing and obnoxious to the prisoner than our obsolete stocks could have been—in the hot morning sun. Poor wretch! he appeared very helpless and forlorn as he leant forward on the edge of the great square board fastened round his neck, and through the centre of which his head protruded in a somewhat laughable fashion—as a little child fed him from a basin, and a watchful guardian stood by to overlook the integrity of the wooden collar.

Out in the open country it was rather astonishing to discover a mounted man riding behind us, for the very ostensible purpose of guiding our steps, but in reality to watch us—an

extension of magisterial solicitude and thoughtfulness that we unkindly believed we could have dispensed with, for of all things in travel nothing feels more galling than to be dogged by spies and haunted by reporters. However, we never spoke to the individual, but pushed on in front, confident of having his company for many days, seeing that



The Punishment of the Cangue.

he bestrode two well-filled carpet saddle-bags, and that his large yellow waterproof coat was rolled like a valise behind the wooden saddle to be ready for a rainy day.

We had now passed from the most important of the eighteen provinces of China—that of Chili, signifying Direct Rule, because in it is the capital, Peking, from whence the Emperor issues his mandates and proclamations to the great empire he reigns over—and beyond the eastern limits of China proper, into the south-west boundary of what is called the Mantchu country, or Mantchuria, through a portion of

one of the three provinces of which—that of Shinking—it was necessary for us to move in our way along the head of the gulf. Under the Ming dynasty this part of the transmural territory was named 'Tunking,' or the Eastern capital, from the chief town in it; but in our European maps it now figures by the ancient title of Liautung—east of the river Liau—at one time applied only to the country lying between the Corea, the Sea of Japan, and that large river; and also as 'Kwantung,' or the region east of the Pass or Great Wall, a name better known by the people among whom we travelled than any other.

We were also on the track of the Coreans, who, issuing at a certain period of the year from the Fung-whang-ting—a town at the gate of that name in the palisade which separates the Corea from Eastern Mantchuria, and through which everything must pass between the two countries—traverse this province, and enter Heaven's Empire by the gate we had just left, on their mission to pay tribute and homage to the once mighty Autocrat, and transact other political business at Peking. The road, still continuing to the north-east, was wide and firm, though unmade, and may be busy enough at some other time of the year, but now it was almost lonely, and ran away over gently undulating ground, flanked on the left-hand side for many miles by quiet little villages, and on the right by fields and sandy patches extending down to the waters of the Gulf of Liautung.

At about a mile from the gate of the custom-house town, and but a short distance from the highway, stood a massive square embattled tower,—something after the fashion of the old Peel houses, or castles on the Scottish border, built of brick, and about eighty feet high, but without any outward sign of defence beyond that of its own height and solidity. This, we had been told by the commander of Shan-hai, was the real boundary between China and Mantchuria in this direction; but in all likelihood he had been in error, as the

Wall must have been intended to limit the confines of both countries.

On the other side of this building, at intervals of what was said to be three lí, or a mile, began a series of circular forts, also of brick, and furnished with a crenelated parapet; but they were neither so wide nor so tall as the square one, and altogether in outline resembled lofty martello towers placed on commanding positions, sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left of the road, and following the coast line for a stretch of about fifty miles.

Many were in a good state of repair—or rather preservation—and had resisted the weather so well that no signs of decay could be perceived; but others were rent, cracked, and shaky, and several had been stripped of the external casing of brickwork by the villagers. They showed their compact interiors of mud and lime so plainly that there could be no doubts as to these mile forts having been erected as places of temporary defence only from their summits, and not as habitations for garrisons, or places to which to fly for support or shelter in case of attack; as their structure was solid throughout, and the walls were a uniform blank, displaying neither door to enter by, nor window to light up a room or staircase within, thereby leading one to surmise that they must have been accessible only by means of ladders or some such contrivance.

I have made every enquiry possible, both at the time of our journey and since, regarding the history and uses of these isolated works of other days, but without much success. Their object was evidently to protect the coast against invasion from some sea-going enemy, so that they can hardly be considered as supplementary to the Great Wall, or as an auxiliary means of repelling the audacious Mantchus in their attacks on that extensive line of defence; and from their integrity and general appearance appear to have been thrown up many centuries subsequently to the reign of the Ta Tsin

dynasty. It is well known, however, that the intrepid Mongol, Kublai Khan, the founder of the Yuen dynasty, in 1280 despatched a great army to attack Japan, and subjugate the high-spirited Japanese, who had refused to acknowledge his supreme sway and to render the customary tribute exacted from neighbouring states as a token of submission. The expedition met the merited fate of the Spanish Armada, for the troops were wrecked and slaughtered, and scarcely a man returned to China.

'The Land of the Day-dawn,' elated and emboldened by the defeat of the arrogant Chinese, took the initiative in a long list of retaliatory measures, and its predatory bands harassed the sea-board of China by plunder and desolation, and making dire inroads on the unfortunate country, which its rulers vainly endeavoured to remedy and avert. From the beginning of the thirteenth century up to the end of the sixteenth did the unconquered race sweep the coast and pillage every place they set foot in; especially in 1388, in the twenty-second year of Hung-woo of the Ming dynasty, when they caused that monarch much uneasiness by their wholesale devastations and piratical seizures, and drove him to all kinds of shifts without avail.

At last he solicited the counsel of a minister, who, from his knowledge of nautical matters, the emperor thought would be a fitting person to give advice. In reply to His Majesty, this man gave it as his opinion, that as the Japanese came by sea, by sea they must be repelled. He said, 'Let there be built along shore, at certain intervals, places of defence, occupied by land troops; and between them let vessels of war be stationed. Thus in all probability the Japanese will be unable to land, or if they do, it will be impossible for them to spread themselves. Further, instead of oppressing the coast with troops brought from a distance, let every fourth man of the inhabitants be required to bear arms.'

To this proposal the Emperor assented, and fifty towns

(or towers?) were built near the sea, each of them defended by a thousand men.* But the Chinese annalists tell us how ineffectual even this strong measure was to stop the ravagers' hands, for they record nothing but misfortunes and tales of sacking and conflagration for nearly two hundred years after, and relate how these irresistible reivers fought their way up the Yang-tsze-Kiang at last as far as Nanking, clearing all before them, and killing all who opposed their onward sweep and fell into their hands. This last event occurred in the middle of the sixteenth century, and the historian informs us that about the same time lead bullets were first used, and muskets first introduced by Japanese, who entered the country and were captured; and their lives were only spared on the plea that they were required to teach the Chinese the use of these arms, as their own were exceedingly inefficient and rude;* an example of liberality and willingness to borrow, even from an enemy, very different to the close conservatism and blind policy of the present Mantchu dynasty, which succeeded that of the troubled Mings.

May we not then suppose that these guardian edifices have been a portion of the minister's proposed bulwark against the buccaneers from Zipangu, and for some reason or other raised here to defend the most vulnerable corner of the province, as well as to be a line of outworks in advance of the Great Wall itself?

Between ten and twenty miles from Shan-hai Kwan, when the country becomes wider, and the high road winds over rough knolls and through broken ground, among the luxuriant crops, and often between thick rows of willow trees, the higher mountains to the north and north-west assume an almost Alpine grandeur in stateliness and outline; and here it is that the Wall shows out to most advantage in the brilliancy and glow of the morning sunshine. The

* *Chinese Chronology*: Morrison.

pleasant old Scotchman, John Bell, of Antermony, who travelled from Russia to Peking, in the suite of a Russian diplomatic mission under Ismailoff, in the reign of the Emperor Kang-hi, 142 years ago; and who has left us a lucid and veracious account of the journey, breaks out into a burst of astonishment and delight when describing the part of the Wall through which they entered China away to the north-west. He tells us, it is commonly designated the 'endless wall' by the people, and expatiates on the magnificence and wonder of its situation as it skirts from rock to rock, with its square turrets here and there; but certain I am that nowhere could it be more grandly viewed, nor at any other place could such a peculiarly apposite and majestic a range of cliffs and peaks be found to display so well this grand work of man's hands, than in this eastern corner of the empire.

There is a something closely allied to a sense of sublimity that takes possession of the mind when the delighted eye is made to wander quietly along that magnificent range, where many a grim crag is undergoing transfiguration in the trembling saffron-and-blue aerial haze of the young morning, and where the acicular jags, harsh and threatening in the foreground, are softened and toned down by the far distance into velvety regularity.

One sees those cloud-capped towers extending away over the declivities in single files, until dwarfed by miles and miles of skyward perspective, they dwindle into microscopical minuteness, yet stand with the solemn dignity belonging to ghosts of a giant creation long gone by, as if they were condemned to look out on the march of time; while the brown-and-black dike at their feet hurries on with many a twist and throe across gorge, defile, and ravine,—now buried in fissure and chasm, then with brobdingnagian spring tearing up the unmeasured height as if in wanton turbulence, altering the outline of the rocky pinnacles which in high air it surmounts, or stealing along the sometimes comparatively smooth margin of the

most soaring of all the range, it looks like a great pucker on the mountains' noble brow, speeding along until in the misty neutral tint it appears but a filmy scratch on a sandstone hill—a slender brown thread fluttering in easy undulations around the mountain tops a great way off as it fines down to a shadowy hair's-breadth on its longsome journey to remote Kansu—the Province of profound Peace! It would be difficult to find, in any other part of the world, a spectacle so full of admiration and so wonder-raising, as this monstrous achievement of other days unfolds itself to the traveller who rides along the pleasant road which conducts him into the Tartar land from the boundaries of old China.

It is about this part of the country that we come upon the footsteps of the early Jesuit father, Paul Verbiest, the priestly mathematician and artillerist; he who wrote treatises and cast cannon for his imperial master, and left behind him an enduring monument of European ingenuity and skill in those astronomical instruments of the most exquisite workmanship and design, which yet stand on that neglected weed-grown wall tower at the south-east angle of the Tartar city of Peking; and whose grave in the Portuguese cemetery, to the westward of the capital, still indicates where he sleeps under a monument with an imperial epitaph. This worthy missionary, I find in Du Halde, accompanied the Emperor Kanghi in his progress into Eastern Tartary in the beginning of 1682, after a serious rebellion of seven years' duration had been suppressed by the execution of three kings or princes, one of whom was strangled in the province he had conquered, another was conveyed to Peking, with his chief partisans, and was there cut to pieces in open court by the mandarins, in revenge for the barbarous murder of their relatives; and the third, who was the ringleader, had committed suicide in order to escape punishment. His Majesty started from Peking at a more favourable season of the year than we did—on the 23rd of March—with the intention of

visiting Liautung, the country of his ancestors, and doing homage at their sepulchres.

He took with him his eldest son of ten years, and three wives, each in a gilt chariot, and was attended by the chief minister, the members of his Court, and the most influential mandarins of all orders, with a retinue so great that it numbered more than 70,000 persons. The accomplished Father was ordered to accompany the magnate, and be always near his person, in order to take observations in his presence of the disposition of the heavens, the height of the pole, the declination of each country (oblique situation on the globe), and to take with instruments the heights of the mountains and distances of places, His Majesty desiring to be informed about meteors and other matters in physics and mathematics.

The account is brief, and almost devoid of interest or assistance to the modern excursionist; for the Father tells us that the road from Peking to Liautung is pretty level, and that the four hundred miles in that province are much more uneven on account of hills. He mentions arriving at Shan-hai Kwan, which he describes as a fort situated between the South Sea and the Northern Mountains, and that here begins the famous wall that separates Liautung from Pechili, and extends a vast way along the northern side over the highest mountains.

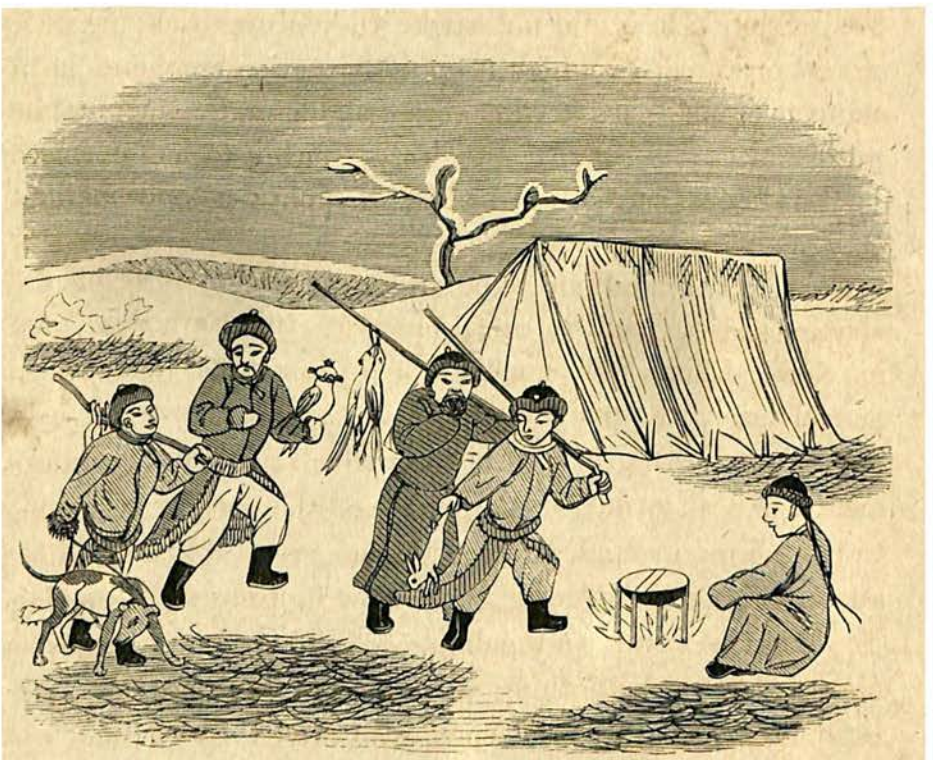
As soon as the Imperial *cortége* entered the province, the Emperor and his nobles quitted the main road and took that of the hills, where they spent some days in hunting.

Paul then briefly sketches out how these sports were managed, and how the emperor, choosing some 3,000 men of his guard armed with bows and darts, dispersed on every side so as to surround the mountains, making a circle of at least three miles.

In this small narrowing space, such a brisk chase was kept up that the unfortunate game, spent with running, lay down

at the hunters' feet, and suffered themselves to be taken up without resistance. He mentions having seen two or three thousand hares thus taken in less than a day, besides a vast number of wolves and foxes. A most ignoble way of conducting sport, certainly, but a method not altogether incompatible with the easy turn of mind in which a Chinaman usually seeks amusement and excitement, without incurring an unpleasant or fagging amount of exertion.*

It was but last winter that we saw the Tien-tsin salt



A Hunting Party (from a Native Drawing).

merchant, as the wealthy *magnifico* of our garrison town was styled, hunting poor puss on the dead flat beyond the town walls, with a pair of slow-running 'noseless' Tartar

* This mode of hunting game is very like the 'Tinchel' of the Scottish Highlanders, where a circle of sportsmen, by surrounding a great space of country and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the ring or 'Tinchel.'

hounds, from which the hare could easily have escaped had it not been also pursued by a couple of hawks—carried to the ground on the wrist of the shaven-headed falconers, who managed them with the tact of sportsmen, and had them confined, wings and legs, with very British-looking brails and jesses, and hoods with scarlet plumes quite after the fashion of two centuries ago. The hunt was a short one, for the prey had no sooner evaded the dogs and was getting into its steady stride for a good run, than swoop went the falcons, and if they did not strike they drove back the poor animal on the dogs, which it could barely circumvent, until another swoop sent it into their very jaws, and the game was over.

The slow sport was watched by the gentle-paced merchant and his guests on ponies, without his betraying any visible marks of exhilaration, or moving many yards from the starting-place. But, in all probability, there are some men in North China who go on foot to hunt their game with matchlock, hawk, and hound, as the annexed copy from a Pekingese drawing will testify; in which a regular encampment has been formed in the snow, and the party is returning to the tented ground, laden with the results of the *battue*, and ready for the evening meal, now in process of cooking. To hunt as we do, and gallop on swift horses over every obstacle, would be nothing short of furious madness in the estimation of our quiet friends, who cannot understand why we should be so possessed and value our lives so cheaply. Even swimming in the Peiho in moderately warm weather took them all by surprise, and one old fellow, after watching the frolics of some hundred of our men in the refreshing waters, could not refrain from exclaiming, that truly the English were a hardy but a strange people.

When the road became rough and wavy and the day was near its meridian, we lost sight of the Wall in the dim distance, and the pensile turrets sank lower and lower as

they and the pre-eminently lofty vantage-ground on which they were posted, subsided behind the lower hills skirting the gulf to the north-east. I then began to think of the feat I had achieved, and the out-of-the-way corner of the globe we were so auspiciously venturing our heads into, without the shadow of a chance of danger; living among and trusting to the good faith and friendship of simple-hearted creatures, whose only fault—which they were powerless to remedy—was unaffected wonderment and curiosity. It may yet be a long time before the foot of the Briton, roaming from Dan to Beersheba, again seeks out those lonesome, but far from unpleasant, paths in this ultra-mundane region, and longer still before we can —

> 'Flying to the Eastward, see
> Some Mrs. Hopkins taking tea
> And toast upon the Wall of China.'

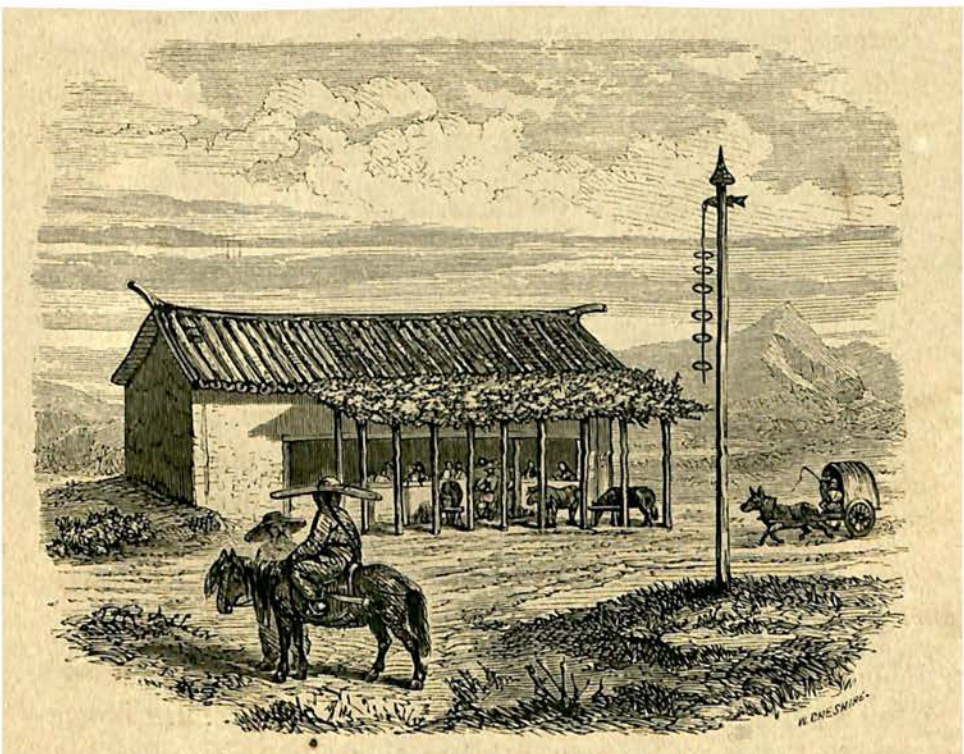
When that enterprising and venturesome lady, imbued with the Quixotic spirit of the nation in worming out every notable nook and difficult journey in creation, does arrive at the Hill-sea barrier, let her profit by our hard day's fight for life among the mountains, and be content to refresh herself with the Sinensian brew on the rampart near the town, instead of a more aspiring situation.

We passed through a number of small hamlets and what would, perhaps, be called towns—one of which, Hun-Chow, a walled town, and apparently of some importance at a period somewhat distant from the present, was in dismal ruins and filthy in the extreme.

The midday halt, after twenty miles of a journey, was in the bustling village of Cow-chow-wah, where there was a regular caravansary for the benefit of travellers, got up in a manner new to us.

A long one-storied house built of brick,—the entire front of which had been devoted to yawning windows and door

open to the roadside, was nearly concealed by an almost equally long shed made of slender tree-stems, and roofed in by dry, russet-coloured fir branches, beginning from the half-concave tiles and running out on the path for a considerable number of feet. Underneath this numbers of ponies and mules fed in mangers, and others stood saddled and bridled ready for moving off. Inside the building little parties of dusty individuals were comforting themselves on the best cheer the place could afford; and others sipped tea,



A Caravansary beyond the Wall.

or sent out rolling clouds of smoke from the over-dried tobacco continually undergoing a cloudy change in the little bowls of homely pipes. The sign-post, henceforward to be met by the half dozen in every town, was characteristic of people with odd fancies. Topped by a tiny conical ornament, it had, not far from the end, a sickly-looking wooden fish pinned across, with a ring in its mouth—fish and ring

strongly recalling to our memories the emblematical salmon or trout represented in the Glasgow coat of arms as gliding across the stem of a tree—from which hung a line having at intervals brown hoops with a fancy paper fringe.

We had scarcely time to note these, as we steered past a footman and an equestrian who were anxiously guessing what we could be, and endeavoured to escape damage from a mule cart that was going eight miles an hour, when four men hustled out of the doorway, and another uncoiled himself from an easy position in which he was snoring out the lazy hours under the shady outwork, to gather about us. They were a band of swag-bellied brothers, each of whom, for size and weight, must have eclipsed all other men I have seen among a people whose principal indication of prosperity in mind, body, and worldly estate is the being preposterously fat and in good case. The senior of these portly youths advanced with a rolling gait a pace or two, and reclining his folded hands over the amplitudinous corporation that bulged out balloon-like in front, gave a guffaw that rumbled sonorously from the lower regions of his immense body, and shook the yellow integument hanging in unctuous folds around his shining face; and then in a succession of satisfactory grunts managed to enquire, 'Do you come from Ta-tsin?' To which we, translating the 'Ta-tsin' as the old name for China, or perhaps the more modern one for Peking, answered with another grunt, signifying 'Yes,' and were soon breakfasting under the attentive auspices of the bulky family, and the observant eyes of the temporary inmates.

In the afternoon — such a beautiful afternoon it was, though overheated rather—we were more than ever pleased with the country, and the journey yet before us. The road, though lonely and dull, was by no means bad, and sometimes led us through a well-cultivated district with dainty little hamlets sparsely spread among the tilled fields, or vil-

lages at pretty regular intervals by the wayside, which, from the disproportionate number of inns and fish sign-posts displayed, might lead one to infer were solely maintained for the convenience of wayfarers like ourselves. At the outskirts of some were the same description of little temples, covered in by old willows, which we had noticed on the other side of the Wall; and now and then, in some favourite strip of open ground, a lot of children would be playing at shuttlecock with their feet, or romping about at a more boisterous game—one party, in particular, we saw amusing themselves at blind man's buff, in which the blindfolded urchin and his tormentors acted just as they would have done had they shared our own school-day freaks.

It was somewhat satisfactory to be enabled to remark that not very unfrequently blooming girls with uncramped feet oftentimes joined in these merry pastimes, and gave a more lively aspect to the game; and that in sundry cottages, strong countrywomen ventured beyond their thresholds, busying themselves in outdoor labour, or strolled comfortably in natural-sized shoes with high clog soles.

We set these down as Mantchus; but I am not certain whether we were correct. At any rate, they looked different beings to the usual run of sheep-footed Chinese women we had hitherto seen, and were doomed to meet everywhere in our peregrinations in the land; for their hair was quietly smoothed down about their heads, or in the younger females gathered up in bows, without all that extravagant amount of gumming and skewering so indulged in by the vain little bodies of China; and they were taller, stronger, and more independent-looking in the long blue cotton gowns which they wore, and which hung loosely about them, like a chemisette, from their shoulders almost to the ground, hiding the outlines of their figures, and leaving us only a few inches of their homespun trousers to look at, before these were tucked, in a masculine manner, into the legs of white socks. Their

faces, too, were round and heavy, and their features were less pleasing, and did not evince so much intelligence or vivacity as those of the crippled wives on the other side of the Wall.

Tartar Ladies.

Nearly every aspiring little town or larger-sized village had its temple to Thalia rigged up in the public road, or in a shady bye-lane, and primitive to a degree beyond Western belief. These rustic theatres offered no more pretensions to convenience or effect than did the creaky four-wheeled wagon on which Susarion and Dolon first exhibited their invention—the original comedy—in the streets of Athens, for a cask of wine and a basket of figs. There was a shaky old cart, with more frequently two wheels than four, and *minus* the ordinary sides, made safe for the agile footsteps of the strolling Thespis by a very limited platform of boards fixed on the warped and cracked shafts—a very small table and two very decayed chairs, to serve as stage furniture, disposed

towards the back of the conveyance, and a millet-stalked framework propped up on supports and thatched with rushes to screen the actor's head from the sun; while sometimes a form or two would flank each side for the accommodation of the discordant orchestra and the teapots.

There was not much to enliven us for a long part of the way, though the scenery was as varied as our proximity to the mountains on the one hand, and to the shores of the gulf on the other, would admit. There was still, to the left, the same kind of rugged grandeur hanging about the lonely mountain tops, and the same charming peeps of green vallies and tilled fields occurring at their base which we had before admired; and on the right the yellow shingle, with the distant waters of the eastern sea, unspecked by any sail of mat or calico, smoothed out in an unlimited surface of silvery white.

A peasant's cart sometimes made us move to one side of the dusty road; but this was seldom. Once we passed a rumbling old car, grunting and squealing through lack of repair and lubrication, drawn by a sorry mule, in which was the earthly all of a peripatetic juggler or acrobat; consisting of unassuming but inscrutable bags and boxes of leather, wooden swords and sham spears, basins and bottles of stone, and the little ornamented stand, on which was secured the tinkling brass gongs and small drum, used to give a theatrical effect to the open-air performance, as well as to stimulate the eye and hand of the hard-up, weary-looking man who strode at the head of the half-starved beast, urging it on with a *cluck* or a *turr* as if anxious to reach some town before the night set in.

A ragged body in female guise—probably his consolation—squatted on a bundle of odds and ends over the axletree, suckling one child and affording a pillow for the heads of two others, that were too young to follow the footsteps of two or three old-fashioned imps who, almost shoeless, laboured along

the side path. The rear was brought up by an undersized Bruin which came limping along footsore, and hanging heavily on the chain that bound him to the wandering household. He was nearer the colour of a Siberian wolf—thanks to the incessant dredging to which he was subjected in the impalpable dust—than a black-furred bear, and showed himself all the worse for hard feats and harder fare.

A Juggler's Cart.

Rather more frequently than we desired, we came across sundry stragglers, whose appearance, to say the best for them, was suspicious. A few wore desperate hazards stamped on their faces, while all bore some kind of weapon, oftener than otherwise a spear, but with what object we could not glean. There must have been some cause for the constancy with which every man, young and old, stuck to his arms in this part of the country. Even the poor old wretch who drove his donkey along the road, flourished a rusty lance over the

load of firewood that was piled on its back, as if he apprehended an attack. We were afterwards told that this fashion or necessity arose from the frequency with which wolves left their lairs and secluded haunts among the mountains, to avail themselves of the dense cover afforded by the far-extending crops of millet in the autumn, and pounced upon travellers and dwellers near the borders of these cereal jungles; but the cadaverous heads displayed so often by our path rather tended to confirm us in our opinion, that man was more to be dreaded than wild beasts.

CHAPTER XX.

PASTORAL LIFE — INDUSTRY — YELLOW-SKINNED VULCANS — M. ABEL RÉMUSAT ON THE INFLUENCE OF ASIATIC INGENUITY ON THE NATIONS OF THE WEST—HORSE-SHOEING IN CHINA—FARRIER'S INSTRUMENTS—THE CHINESE VETERINARY SURGEON—HORSE-FLESH—CHUNG-HUE-SOH.

THE dry beds of many rivers and streams unknown to song were crossed, a few of them during some portion of the year washing over a wide space of pebbly ground; and we forded others whose volume had very much contracted during the summer drought. For some distance here and there the soil was poor, and afforded only a thin dry herbage for the sustenance of flocks of diminutive black goats, and scraggy ponies and asses, which were tended by wild unkempt urchins, who roved listlessly around their herds, or lay in the full face of the cauterising sun, crooning snatches of unearthly-sounding ditties. These were the first glimpses I had as yet obtained of a pastoral life in a region where we certainly expected to find Tartar nomads, sauntering behind browsing swarms of cattle and sheep, or dwelling in black felt tents—for the purchase of which, as *curios*, we had so many commissions imposed upon us before leaving Tien-tsin —and drinking mares' milk, fermented or unfermented, as may have suited their palates or desires. But everywhere else beyond these uncultivated pasturages, congregations of erratic tribes would have been as much out of place, and as much bewildered, as butterflies in Fleet Street; for all was a great grain-field and a great forest of strong stems, more thickly planted and nearly more difficult of penetration than a backwoods forest.

In all the villages something was going on—fathers, wives, sons, and daughters, were, in many houses, or out of doors, spinning cotton by very antediluvian-like wheels; and grandfathers and grandmothers twined the same material, or silk, into cord by means of an iron weight set twisting round at the end of the string. The tramping crockeryware-mender assiduously drilled holes in the cracked and broken pots and basins, and bound the divided edges together with artful little clamps of iron or copper. The indefatigable son of Crispin seated himself at the family doorway, and soled or patched the fronts of those easy wearing shoes of blue or white cotton stuff, which for comfort we have often thought far more civilised-like than our own toe-squeezers. And the barber lathered and shaved the heads and faces of his dusty customers, or scraped the inner sides of their eyelids, and trifled with their tympanums with his hooks, pickers, and brushes, greatly to the gratification of the individuals so operated on, who appeared quite happy while undergoing these injurious ticklings.

Above all the stir and bustle of business, the whizzing of saws, or the clanking of copper and tinsmiths,—with the more subdued hum of less noisy avocations, the rat-tat tittle-tat of the blacksmith rung out as cheerfully and harmoniously as if it were being rehearsed for the adaptation of another Handel —the two strokes of the heavy sledge on the iron, and the one rhythmically struck in by the smaller hammer, blending in symphonious vibrations with the intermediate jingling tap on the hard-faced anvil, as the perspiring Cyclops, Arges, and Brontes fashioned and formed the rude implements of husbandry used in the fields.

One could scarcely forbear smiling at the odd resemblance of these yellow-skinned Vulcans to their co-artisans of the West, as they swung their weighty hammers overhip with a vigorous grunt, and wore the unimpeachable trade-mark stamped in a smutty daub on each side of their undeveloped

noses. Little scraps and shreds of iron were carefully welded into serviceable bars in the blaze of a fire scantily supplied with coal, but made more effective in its work by being covered over with a piece of earthen pot, which threw back the flame on the metal, and the heat was intensified by the regularly intermittent blast of air from a wooden box, something like a small travelling trunk, in which an *aide* slowly pushed and drew the wooden piston that served as a propeller of air through the nozzle of this very simple and efficient bellows.

Occasionally in the smaller, but more frequently in the larger, towns, one lights upon a sedulous lot of Chinese Wayland Smiths — characters seldom, if ever, seen in the South—moiling away at their humble occupation of assisting nature to sustain the tear and wear imposed on the hoofs of the ponies, mules, and oxen so much employed in a tract of country without canals, and with but roughly constructed roads, and pursuing that lowly art with care and tact; an art unknown to antique civilisation, and which is only discovered in the modern world after the wild hordes had made their inroads, overrun and transmogrified the older nations of the West; perhaps in the same manner that their barbarous predecessors in Asia may have done to facilitate their rapid advance towards the wealthy capitals of these nations, when the dwellers in the terror-stricken towns through which they passed were unconscious of the utility of iron as a means of protecting the hoofs of their steeds — for we may presume that the Romans knew nothing of this most useful art, which has so altered the nature and character, and enhanced the value of our willing beasts of draught and burthen, enlarged the ways of commerce, and benefited mankind: when in Italy alone they laid several thousand miles of paved road at an enormous cost of time and labour, and which have withstood the trials of 2,000 years, with the object, among other things, of preserving

their horses' feet; and we also know that they had to borrow other motive powers than animal strength to move their heavy wagons along these roads, because they did not know how to shoe their horses; and this, in all likelihood, when the Chinese or Tartars were fully cognisant of the principles and practice of this species of handicraft, — for with them it bears evident signs of a venerable existence.

And yet it is strange to find these ultra-mundane shoeing-smiths acting in their way much as our own artisans do, and deftly using tools which, if not quite identical with those handled in the London forges, betray, one could almost vouch, a common origin.

And so it is with many other cognate arts you can daily see followed in the workshops of the towns of North China, where the analogy between the manufacturing, preparing, and applying different articles, as well as the instruments required in the processes, of the remote East and West are surprising and perplexing to the stranger, whose first thoughts are whether we have borrowed from this people or they from us; or whether there has been a spontaneity of origin or invention at the extreme ends of the earth, when the wants of man compelled him to seek new means of production or utilisation.

Cogitations lead to nothing, and enquiries go no farther; but M. Abel Rémusat gives us a little matter for speculation when he alludes to this affinity in his Memoirs. Speaking of the Mongol hordes who had swarmed into Western Asia and began to exert a panic pressure on Europe, and the treaties and overtures that succeeded between the Tartar princes and Western kings, especially towards the termination of the Crusades, he says: 'The series of events which are connected with these negotiations serves to complete the history of the Crusades; but the part they may have had in the great moral revolution, which soon followed the relations which they occasioned between people hitherto

unknown to each other, are facts of an importance more general and still more worthy of our particular attention. Two systems of civilisation had become established at the two extremities of the ancient continent, as the effect of independent causes, without communication, and consequently without mutual influence.

'All at once the events of war and political combinations bring into contact these two great bodies, long strangers to each other. The formal interviews of ambassadors are not the only occasions which brought them together. Other occasions more private, but also more efficacious, were established by imperceptible, but innumerable ramifications, by the travels of a host of individuals, attracted to the two extremities of the earth, with commercial views, in the train of ambassadors or armies.

'The irruption of the Mongols, by throwing everything into agitation, neutralised distance, filled up intervals, and brought the nations together; the events of war transported millions of individuals to an immense distance from the places where they were born. History has recorded the voyages of kings, of ambassadors, of missionaries. Sempad, the Orbelian; Hayton, king of Armenia; the two Davids, kings of Georgia; and several others were led by political motives to the depths of Asia. Yeroslaf, grand duke of Sousdal, and vassal of the Mongols, like the other Russian princes, came to Kara-Koroum, it was said, administered by the empress herself, the mother of the Emperor Gayouk. Many monks, Italians, French, and Flemings, were charged with diplomatic missions to the grand khan. Mongols of distinction came to Rome, Barcelona, Valencia, Lyons, Paris, London, Northampton; and a Franciscan of the kingdom of Naples was Archbishop of Peking. His successor was a professor of theology of the Faculty of Paris.

'But how many others, less celebrated, were led in the train of those men, either as slaves, or impelled by the desire of

gain, or by curiosity, to countries hitherto unexplored. Chance has preserved the names of a few. The first envoy who came on the part of the Tartars to the King of Hungary was an Englishman, banished from his country for certain crimes, and who, after having wandered through Asia, had finally taken service among the Mongols. A Flemish cordelier met, in the depths of Tartary, a woman of Metz, named Paquette, who had been carried away from Hungary; a Parisian goldsmith, whose brother was established in Paris on the Grand Pont; and a young man from the environs of Rouen, who had been present at the capture of Belgrade. He saw there also Russians, Hungarians, and Flemings.

'A singer, named Robert, after travelling through the whole of Eastern Asia, returned to find a grave in the Cathedral of Chartres. A Tartar was a helmet-maker in the armies of Philip the Fair.'

After enumerating a number of travellers and adventurers who penetrated this dark region, he goes on to say:—

'Many of these adventurers must have established themselves, and died in the countries they went to visit. Others returned to their country as obscure as when they left it; but with their imaginations full of what they had seen, relating it all to their families and friends, and doubtless with exaggerations; but leaving around them, amidst ridiculous fables, a few useful recollections and traditions productive of advantage. Thus were sown in Germany, in Italy, in France, in the monasteries, among the nobility, and even in the lowest grades of society, precious seeds destined to bud at a later period.

'All these obscure travellers, carrying the arts of their native country to distant lands, brought back other information about these no less precious; and thus effected, unconsciously, exchanges more productive of good than all those of commerce. By this means not merely the traffic in silks,

in porcelains, in commodities from Hindostan, was made more extensive and more practicable, opening new routes to industry and commerce; but that which was far more valuable, foreign manners and customs of before unknown nations, confined since the fall of the Roman empire within too narrow a circle. Men began to have an idea that, after all, there was something worthy of notice in the finest, the most populous, and the most anciently civilised of the four quarters of the globe. People began to think of studying the arts, the religions, the languages of the nations who inhabited it; and there was even a proposition to establish a professorship of the Tartar language in the University of Paris.

'Before the establishment of the intercourse which first the Crusades, and then later the irruption of the Mongols, caused to spring up between the nations of the East and those of the West, the greater part of those inventions which distinguished the close of the middle ages had been known to the Asiatics for centuries. All'— speaking of a number of discoveries and inventions, such as gunpowder, the polarity of the loadstone, playing cards, printing, &c.— 'all were made in Eastern Asia; all were unheard of in the West. Communication took place; it was continued for a century and a half; and, ere another century had elapsed, all these inventions were known in Europe. Their origin is veiled in obscurity. The region where they manifested themselves— the men who produced them — are equally a subject of doubt. Enlightened countries were not their theatre. It was not learned men who were their authors; it was common men, obscure artisans, who lighted up, one after another, these unexpected flames.

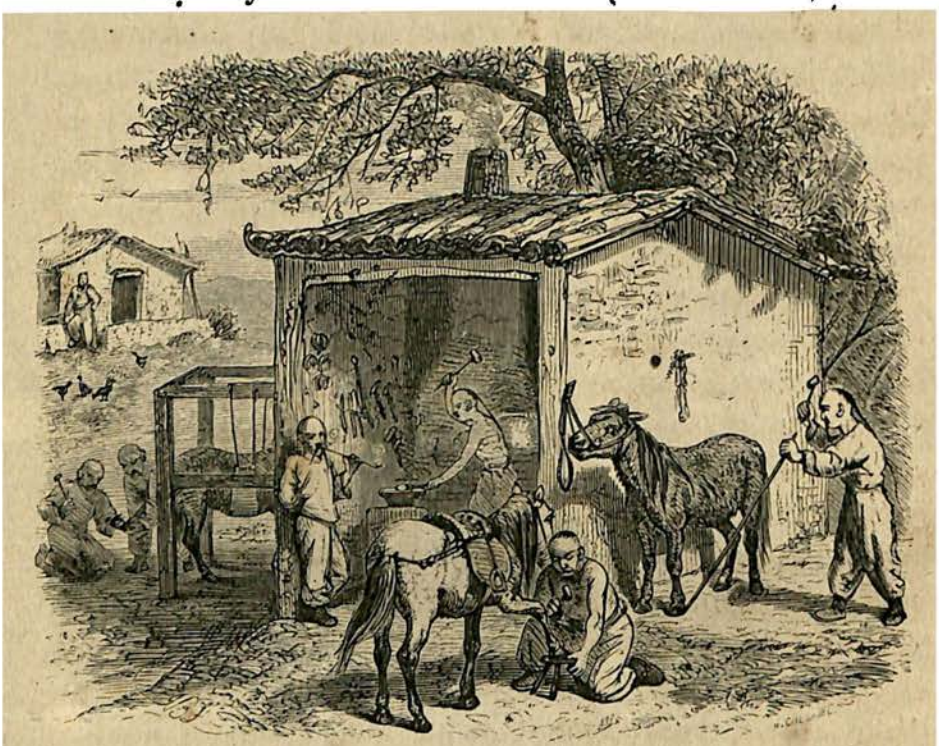
'Nothing can better demonstrate the effects of a communication; nothing can be more in accordance with what we have said above as to those invisible channels — those imperceptible ramifications — whereby the science of the

eastern nations penetrated into Europe. The greater part of these inventions appear at first in the state of infancy in which the Asiatics have left them; and this circumstance alone almost prevents our having any doubts as to their origin. Some are immediately put in practice; others remain for some time enveloped in obscurity, which conceals from us their progress, and they are taken, on their appearance, for new discoveries. All are soon brought to perfection, and, as it were, fecundated by the genius of Europeans operating in concert, thus communicating to human intelligence the greatest impulse known to history.'

You cannot help bestowing a passing glance at the operations of the *Ting-chang-ta*, as the shoer of hoofs is denominated, for you may require his assistance frequently during your travel to secure your ponies' clanking shoes, or to adjust a new pair; and you are certain to find him busy in the most crowded thoroughfare, or in the most stirring corner of the market-place.

He is not, generally, a very bold man in his calling, nor has he much patience with skittish or unmanageable solipedes; for he too often makes it his practice to secure the unruly or vicious brute in the old-fashioned trevises or stocks — exact counterparts of those employed by country farriers in Britain and on the continent half a century ago — where it is firmly bound and wedged in by ropes and bars, and a twitch — an instrument of punishment still tolerated and favoured in other lands — twisted to agony round the under-lip of the subdued beast, until its extremities have been iron-clad. The more docile and submissive animal is less harshly dealt with, for it is allowed to stand untied, with one of its feet flexed on a low three-legged stool, while the workman shaves off great slices of superfluous horn from the thick soles, by a weapon which differs in no particular that we can see from the now obsolete buttress of England, or the present *boutoir* of the French *Maréchal*. Perhaps a

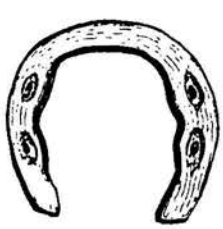
fidgetty draught animal does not quite relish the idea of parting from its worn-out shoes, and the squeamish shoer, to avoid sundry uncomfortable contusions on his shins, stands



Horse-shoeing.

some distance away, as he hammers at the end of a long thin-pointed poker, inserted between the useless plate of iron and the hoof, to twist it off.

Whether aware of it or not, like the French, the Chinese seem to prefer the foot in process of shoeing being held up by an assistant, instead of courageously grasping it between their knees or laying it on the outside of the thigh, as our farriers do, and dispensing with this auxiliary and oftentimes needless help. The Tartar ponies being light-paced and small, and the roads not very stony, the shoe is light, thin, and narrow, and quite ductile. It is, in fact, nothing more than a slight rim of tough iron,



Tartar Horse-shoe.

pierced by four nail-holes, with a groove for the reception of each nail-head; and the heels are drawn so thin that, when the shoe is nailed on the foot, they are bent inwards to catch each angle of the hoof and thus support the nails. Altogether, it is far more like one of our own horse-shoes than those of the Affghans, the Arabian or Barbary, or the Persian and Turkish curiosities, and certainly very far before the straw sandal everywhere used in Japan to protect the horses' feet.

There is little care and a great deal of dexterity exhibited in nailing on one of these iron plates. The excellent strong feet of the ponies afford every facility for a rough and ready job—the overgrown horn is shaved away to a level surface: a single blow makes the shoe wider or narrower without heating: it is applied to the solid crust, and one by one the unbending nails are sent through the whole thickness of the insensitive part of the foot with a few sharp taps, the tips of the nails being only simply twisted and hammered close to the face of the hoof; and the Wayland Smith has earned his silver groat. At odd intervals one comes upon a group of these tinkers arming the hot, painful, road-worn toes of prostrate struggling bullocks with a nearly semicircular plate of metal on the outer margin of the hoof; and so smartly, that the bellowing creatures have hardly been thrown on the ground and secured than they are up again, proof against the hard, sun-baked roads.

There is yet another novel institution, connected with the utilisation and preservation of domestic animals, to be found in the larger towns of North China, which is, perhaps, altogether unknown in the South, where canals, rivers, and streams, and the tightly-packed character of the tilled fields, forbids the expenditure of land in wide highways, and consequently abolishes to a very great degree the necessity of employing animal labour for purposes of traffic.

This is the 'Yi-ma,' or horse doctor, a rather well-to-do

and intelligent personage oftentimes, who pushes at seasons a lively business. He visits his dumb patients fan in hand, and ministers to their ailments with the dignity and self-possession of a skillful practitioner, and a useful member of society. He is most frequently seen about the public ways in the forenoon, hurrying on behind a coolie or servant, who carries, suspended from each end of a bamboo pole, the trays containing his implements and drugs. You may here and there meet with traces of his handiwork in grotesque-looking punctures on the bodies of sickly nags, or hocks grooved and blemished by the too free application of the actual cautery.

Make the acquaintance of the first good-natured Vespasian you meet, and if the *rencontre* be ever so brief—if you are curious and humour him, and can talk to him on his professional mysteries, you will be sure to leave him a little enlightened; for he is not backward in imparting information, perplexing and ridiculous though it may seem to many Britons. He will tell you, in all likelihood, about the *Yang* and *Yin*, or the male and female principles, and how these have produced the celestial and material worlds; and, if he be a scholar, he may quote the opinion of Choo-tsze, a venerated sage, and say 'that the Celestial principle in the beginning was male, the terrestrial female; that all animate and inanimate nature may be divided into masculine and feminine, and nothing can exist independent of the *Yang* and *Yin*.'

This doctrine of materialism being so widely extended is, of course, in its dual capacity, rigidly applied to everything connected with the lower animals, as well as man. Your informant may cite the words of the learned author of a work on Chinese Veterinary Medicine, published more than five generations ago, which are to the effect, 'that though the forms and natures of the horse, ox, and camel'—the animals of which he specially treats—'be so dissimilar, and so different from man, yet are they all equally amenable to the influences of the *Yin* and *Yang*; for, as in him, it is only by

a harmonious and due union of them in their proper proportions and qualities, that those sanative conditions on which utility so much depends can be developed and maintained; when this is departed from, disease is the result.'

You will soon discover that this man, like our own empirical farriers, has had a lot of idle notions, vague traditions, and mouldy recipes, as well as the most approved modes of performing operations, handed down from the accumulated experience of generations in the ancestral line; with, in addition to the few stereotyped facts swamped in the middle of silly whimsies, instruments in a case carefully treasured, and bearing inscriptions which tell of their great age. This instrument-case and its contents is certain to be a wonderful curiosity. It is made of a brown kind of leather, something in the form of the pipe and tobacco pouch carried by almost every individual, with too long thongs to suspend it to the girdle. This is the operating receptacle, and the first article he will show you may possibly be a small round peg of iron, not unlike a skewer, which he uses when a horse is lame from cold (rheumatism?) by making it red-hot, wrapping it round with tow and oil, and then—having incised the skin in several places over the diseased textures, with an arrow-headed lancet—thrusting it two or three inches deep among the muscles.

The next may chance to be a slender iron hook with a sharp point, to seize and drag out the useful membrane at the inner corner of the horse's eye, for the purpose, he will aver, of dividing a small tumour which forms on it sometimes, and which causes the animal to 'leave its grass,' and be dull and heavy. If you hint that he must be mistaken, and that the tumour he imagines to have grown there is not only natural, but of the highest service, he will incredulously smile, and withdraw a tube from its corner, made like a surgeon's canula, but of a thick goose or eagle's quill, having a number of small holes in its circumference near the round

end. With this in his hand, he will boast of the number of ponies' lives he has saved when, at a certain season of the year, they have been allowed to eat too much grass, and death from suffocation is imminent by the distension of the abdomen diminishing the capacity of the chest; and if a pony or mule be near, he will obligingly indicate the exact spot over the large intestine where he makes a cut and a puncture for the introduction of the tube and the escape of the dangerous gas.

In this wonderful wallet he also carries a small punch to expel the deciduous incisors in young animals, when they are loose, or when it is fancied that they prevent mastication. He will go through the operation of venesection if you desire it; and, rendering the jugular vein turgid by pressure at the lower part of the neck, apply the point of his barb-shaped lancet to the skin over that vessel, then drive it in by a little wooden mallet. But he does not approve much of bleeding, and nearly agrees with a popular Chinese physician * as to the little benefit to be derived from the abstraction of blood in fever.

'A fever,' writes this medical authority, 'is a boiling pot; it is requisite to reduce the fire and not diminish the liquid in the vessel if we wish to cure the patient.'

After making you acquainted with a number of peculiar articles, each of which has its own allotted share in surgical demonstrations, he will choose a seton needle, in shape the *fac-simile* of a sailmaker's, to finish his catalogue; and, as he carefully puts them all in their places again, takes the opportunity of dilating on the wonderful cures he has made with this needle, in reducing tumours and opening abscesses, by passing it through their substance and leaving in a medicated thread of hemp for an indefinite period. His knowledge of anatomy is rather crude and confused, though

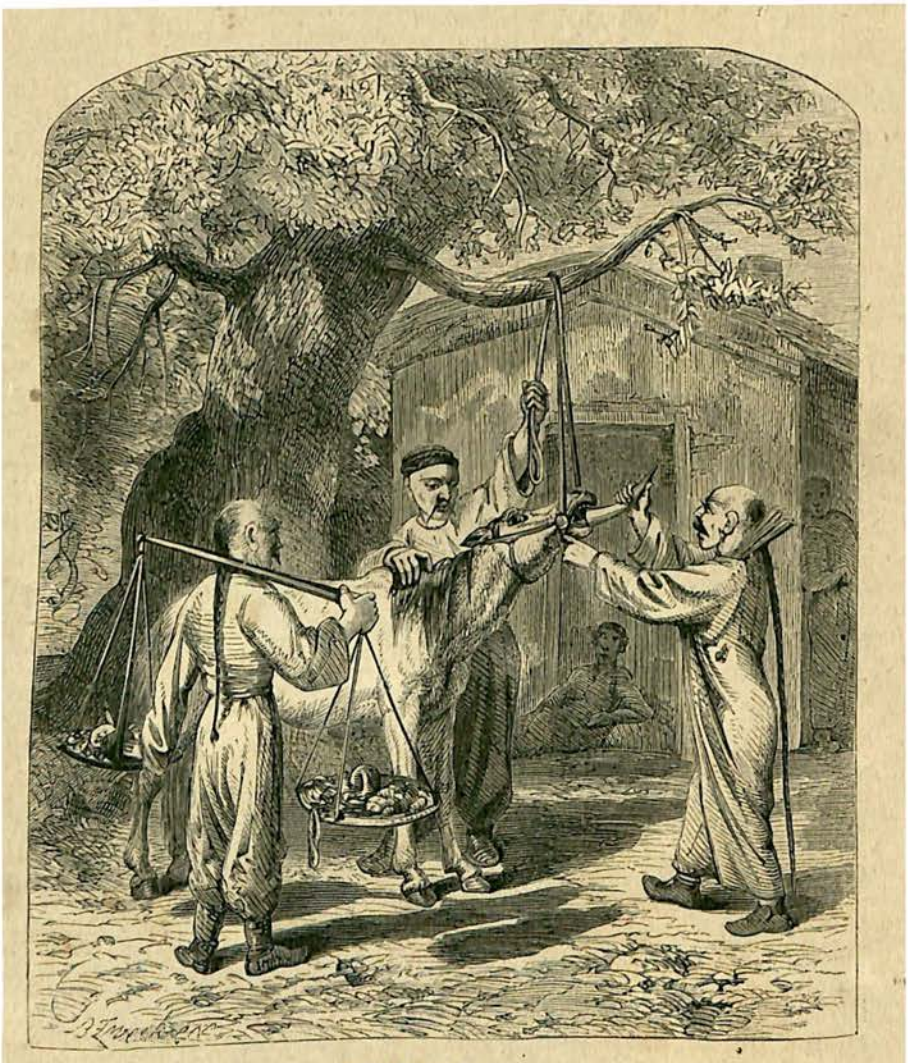
* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.*

he is perfectly aware of the existence of an arterial pulse in several superficial parts of the body; but if you place his finger on the temporal artery, you will undoubtedly be delighted with the joyous grin that overspreads his face at the discovery of another pulse; and when he begins to enlighten you on the vast importance to be attached to the frequency and force of the arterial contractions, he looks grave and learned.

He has the whole surface of the body mapped out into *gates of access*, such as the 'golden gate,' the 'gate of life,' &c. These lead to internal organs, and when one of these organs is supposed to be in a morbid state, a plaister or some other application is stuck over the gate, and, if very serious, a small quantity of medicine is given by the mouth. By the latter method of curing the disease, more particularly when the beast out-of-sorts is fretful and unwilling to be coaxed to swallow unpalateable stuffs, he uses gentle measures at first, and finding these not succeed proceeds to more potent inducement. Over the branch of a neighbouring tree he flings a sort of head collar, with a species of bent gag iron bit, called '*Tiau chiau*'—literally 'Hanging bit'—which, when put on the invalid, answers admirably the double purpose of elevating the head to a proper height, by pulling the end of the rope downwards, and keeping open the mouth. If still refractory in spite of patting and mild expostulations, the '*Nyng-tsz*' or 'twister,' as they dub the twitch, is screwed on the upper or under lip, and the unpleasant medicine, in a semi-fluid mass, is poured down the rebellious throat by means of a drenching-horn, identical with our own equine medicine administrator, and with a tact and neatness quite his own.

He appears to be familiar with a pretty large class of diseases, and talks as if he were very confident of being competent to contend successfully with them, especially with that scourge of the equine race—glanders. From what he

says, you may gather that the Chinese have no schools for the teaching of veterinary science in any part of the Empire; though at Peking there is a Medical Hall, which, however, does not bear the character of being invested with any great degree of influence in disseminating or advancing the very



The Horse Doctor.

elementary, and often preposterously erroneous state of medical knowledge found among the quack and legitimate practitioners in Chinese towns. Indeed, when we visited the Hanlin Yuen or Imperial Academy at Peking—at which, we were informed, besides other sciences taught there, that

of medicine was inculcated — we found the building as ruinous and as lonely as the sheep-pens of a market are when unoccupied. So that, it would appear, the healing art exists and is taught only by the peripatetic quacksalvers.

In small towns and villages there are none of these; so when an animal is sick, or any epizootic makes its appearance, there is a consultation among the owner's friends or the sages of the place to devise the best means of cure; and when anything very serious occurs, entailing great loss of property, incense is burnt to exorcise the evil spirits or to appease the wrath of the angry god—for they seldom, if ever, think of conciliating the good-will of their idols until they find themselves in trouble.

Our veterinary friend has faith in the efficacy of horse-flesh in certain of the ills which prey on mankind, and besides is rather inclined to hippophagy when an accidental death gives him a good carcase. His ideas concerning the noble steed in life or in death are odd enough, and he would have no scruples in subscribing to such freaks of fancy as the following, which are written in a celebrated Chinese work, the *Pun Tsau* or 'Herbal,' published three or four centuries ago.

'The best kind of horse for medical purposes (says this standard authority) is the pure white. Those found in the south and east are small and weak. The age is known by the teeth. The eye reflects the full image of a man. If he eats rice his feet become heavy; if rats' dung, his belly will grow long; if his teeth be rubbed with dead silkworms or black plums he will not eat, nor will he feed if the skin of a rat or wolf be hung in his stable or manger. He should not be allowed to eat from a hog's trough lest he contract disease; and if a monkey be kept in the stable he will not fall sick. The flesh is a good article of food; that of a pure white stallion is the most esteemed and healthy.'

One author recommends eating almonds and taking a meal

of rush broth if the person feels uncomfortable after a meal of horse-flesh. 'It should be roasted and eaten with ginger and pork; and to eat the flesh of a black horse and not drink wine with it, will surely produce death. The fat of the crown of the horse is sweet, and good to make the hair grow and the face to shine.'

The milk, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, placenta, teeth, bones, skin, mane, tail, brains, blood, perspiration, &c., are all lauded as remedies, or articles of diet in various diseases.

'When eating horse-flesh do not eat the liver, because of the absence of a gall-bladder in that organ, which renders it poisonous.' 'The heart of a white horse, or that of a cow, hog, or hen, when dried and rasped into spirit, and so taken, cures forgetfulness; if the patient hears one thing he knows ten.' 'Above the inside of the knees and below the hocks the horse has *yi-yan*, or "night-eyes" (the horny excrescences growing in these situations), which enable him to go in the dark and by night; these are useful in toothache.' 'If a man be restless or hysterical when he wishes to sleep, and it is requisite to put him to rest, let the ashes of a horse's skull be mingled with water and given him, and let him have another skull for a pillow, and it will cure him.'*

It was dusk when we entered one of the long suburban streets of Chung-hue-soh—a street with high embankments on each side, and with large business-like shops, built of brick, perched thereon.

Passing through the ruts and puddles, with lots of eager spectators on every hand, we reached the town walls, which were lofty and apparently in good repair; and, though the temptation was strong within us to explore the interior, as a gateway opened before us, yet bearing still in lively remembrance the infelicitous reception and unnecessary trouble we had been subjected to in our last halting-place for the night,

* Williams' *Middle Kingdom.*

we thought it most advisable to keep clear of the public functionaries for the future. We determined to take up our quarters in one of the outside inns, where we should stand a better chance of passing the dark hours unnoticed, and of departing on the morrow without a watch on our movements, like the one who had followed us nearly all day, and whom we had parted with just before nightfall, when he silently dropped behind, and was then hurrying back to Shan-hia Kwan to give an account of our doings to the fussy magistrates.

Chung-hue-soh gave every token of being the largest and busiest town on the way since we left Tien-tsin. The main thoroughfare running parallel with the wall was nothing but shops, and though they were all closed, or the doors but slightly ajar, revealing a very scantily-lighted range of interiors, yet the tenants were thickly grouped in front laughing, chatting, playing at some game, or making music of a mumpish hypochondriacal character to the strumming of the three-stringed banjo.

We had nearly a mile to walk before a house of entertainment was found, and it was none of the cleanest; for as soon as our evening meal was concluded, to the intense relief of the hundreds who had been bewildering their eyes at our unheard-of manners, M. felt the rooms so hot and dusty that he was fain to make himself a shake-down outside. I gave chase to sundry scorpions which were moved by curiosity and the odorous fumes of the food to leave their hiding-places and approach my kang. Then we went to sleep for the night, but not till after several failures, as some donkeys in the courtyard proved more than usually kind in the exercise of their vocal organs for our amusement, and more than once prompted us to speak of them harshly.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUNDAY MORNING — LONELY SCENERY — BEGGARS — RUINS OF NING YUEN CHOW — GRAIN WAGONS — MANTCHURIAN LI — STUPIDITY OF THE COUNTRY PEOPLE — SHIN SHAN — A PASTORAL PICTURE — CONVOY OF CATTLE — THE FLOCKS — PACK SADDLE TRANSPORT — THE APPROACH TO KIN CHOW — KIN CHOW — THE MARKET-PLACE — MEAT AND FRUIT — GOOD HUMOUR OF THE CHINESE.

THE morning of the 13th July was a Sunday morning, and was ushered in by as lovely a sunrise as could be desired in any part of the world. We were early afoot, and soon receiving the full benefit of a good start from our place of temporary sojourn, where we had slept well, despite the stenches and noise.

Our rides had been long and without intermission since we began the journey; our ponies looked none the worse, certainly, for their exertions, though each day had seen us eight and ten hours in the saddle; but we were apprehensive of overtaxing their strength and remarkable endurance, as well as fatiguing ourselves unnecessarily by these forced journeys of forty or forty-five miles a day. So prudence dictated—and perhaps the remaining sensations of our *divertissement* at the Great Wall recommended — a Sunday's rest, on which occasion we made up our minds to be satisfied with half a day's travelling, should suitable accommodation offer.

It took us a little time to get clear of the town, for its environs assumed comparatively large proportions, besides carrying a very creditable appearance of business, notwithstanding the early hour; and then we had to cross a fordable river, undisturbed by any kind of craft, but which might at other times greatly aid the commercial transactions of the

mercantile community of Chung-hue-soh. The road or track ran up from the hot and air-stagnated plain to the higher land edging the waters of the gulf, giving us in exchange for sandy roads and shingly streams, undulating stretches of green sward or rocky paths, over acclivities and down in easy curves, where, if the soil could not be forced to carry its allotment of grain, cattle and ponies grazed in small troops. From the most elevated knolls we occasionally caught a peep of the scalloped shore, and the unruffled sea looking smoky in the early morning haze.

But all was so unaccountably lonely, and so Sabbath-like on this morning and forenoon, that it would have needed more than an ordinary degree of self-persuasion to induce ourselves to believe that we were wandering among such a toiling, work-a-day people who have no holy day of rest, or that we were in the vicinity of busy towns and striving villages doomed to the unremitting din and motion of traffic and labour. In the universal hush of nature, when such a tranquil and glad quiet reigned over a fair expanse of diversified country, Sabbath thoughts certainly came thickly upon us, and as we leisurely moved along, with nothing but the sunlit scenery around to awaken reflection, the day of rest and Christian thankfulness conjured up home scenes, and we had almost looked to the little clumps of trees for a tapering spire, and strained our hearing to seize the faintest echo of the

> 'Village bells
> Falling at intervals upon the ear
> In cadence sweet!'

But no; the revered memory of such scenes and sounds had no realisation here, and it was somewhat sorrowful to think that

> 'The sound of the church-going bell,
> These valleys and rocks never heard;
> Never sigh'd at the toll of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.'

After winding about a good deal, and meeting only one pedestrian, we descended again into the lower ground, where we passed a sort of Madge Wildfire—a raving demented old body with uncrippled feet, in dirty rags, and with a garland of wild flowers stuck on her head, who laughed, sang, and cried, by turns, as she allowed us to ride by her unsolicited for charity. Farther on we came across many other beggars—old men and old women, blind or lame—the women with natural sized feet, kneeling by the roadside and supplicating alms as earnestly from us as if they had been quite familiar with the presence of foreigners for years; one old croon even going out of her way so far as to slang and curse us like an Irish hag, because we did not satisfy her demands.

At length we drew rein at the diminutive hamlet of Wang-hia-tyer, where there was an inn more inviting and secluded than any we had inspected in the nicely situated villages in the neighbourhood; and opposite which we saw a large harbour protected seaward by two islands, and though apparently very shoal on the land side, yet affording refuge and an anchorage to a number of junks brought up straggligly to their hawsers. On the thick felt mats spread over the 'kang' we spent the afternoon and the night, and, thoroughly rested, began our onward course early next day.

In Du Halde's 'China' the worthy father, Verbiest, in describing his travels in Mantchu Tartary, mentions the state of decay in which he found the places he saw there. 'All the cities and towns I saw in Liautoong,' he says, 'and which are pretty numerous, lie in ruins, everywhere appearing nothing but heaps of stones, bricks, and old rubbish. Some few houses have been lately built within the enclosures of these cities—some of earth, others of remains of the old buildings, but few of brick, most thatched, and in no order. There remains not the least mark of a multi-

tude of towns and villages that stood before the war (the period when the Mantchus succeeded to the imperial rule); for this petty Tartar king (Tientsung, the father of the first Mantchu emperor), who began these wars with very small forces, recruited them with the inhabitants of these places, which he afterwards destroyed to deprive his soldiers of the hopes of returning to their native country.'

That was two centuries ago, and shortly after Tienming —the first redoubtable chief of the Mantchus, who caused the last emperor of the Ming dynasty to feel his power and tremble at his revengeful manifestos—had by levies, conscriptions, imposts, and unbearable exactions, reduced the people of this province to a pitiable condition.

We could see nothing of these dilapidated tenements and cities then reduced to rubbish, until after passing the two villages of Twso-chang and To-tia-dsa, about five miles from the coast, where there was a large and lofty island bristling up near the shore, we came to Ning Yuen Chow, once a walled town of the second order, agreeably situated a short distance from a good level road, and among trees, but where at present everything was lonely and desolate, as we peeped within the gateway of the crumbling brick enclosure. Not a living thing stirred; the houses were roofless, and the walls of the greater number thrown down; while the central street up which we glanced was untrodden, and monopolised by weeds or green-scummed pools. The grey havoc of age, and apparent wanton destruction, seemed to point to this period of Chinese history, when quiet citizens were deprived of their homes and forced to bear arms under the impetuous Mantchus, and afforded us the only example or proof of the probability of such an occurrence as that mentioned by the worthy Jesuit.

The country did not improve on this day's ride, as the houses became less and less tasteful, and the people dirtier

and lazier-looking than those we had hitherto fraternised with.

We passed many wagons laden with agricultural produce, in the shape of bags of pulse or millet, some of them with as many as twelve mules or ponies dragging them along over the uneven ground, to the stimulating chirrup of a great sun-burnt wagoner in a straw hat and light garb, who, with legs extended, like another Colossus of Rhodes, from one shaft to the other, tugged his reins, or artistically cracked a long whip, with a report as loud as a pistol, to stir up the struggling team, always disposed in two lines of three, and one of two, in front of the strongest beast yoked in the shafts. Right well they responded to the incentive, and moved the stiff machine through the most disheartening of tracks with a willingness quite wonderful; their rude hames, and cane or hempen traces, passing through wide harness and shaft-rings to be attached to the axletree, standing the fierce tugs or steady strain remarkably well.

Otherwise, the way was silent and dreary, and the absence of lively passengers or crowded towns made the day's distance long and monotonous. The remains of the round towers we had noted as we left the Great Wall still accompanied us, as they showed their more or less shattered structures perched on plain or height; and between Sai-miau and Cow-chow—two little *bourgs* of an unpretending aspect, a fine bay, about five miles in width, swept round to within two miles of the road, the entrance to it being protected by a high island; while on the western side, the spur of a mountain running at an acute angle from the seemingly interminable chain, swept across our path, and stopping suddenly when it had gained the sea, formed a bold promontory on one corner of the little frith, and gave a stronger contrast to the softly-sloping shallow beach.

The dullness of the journey was much aggravated by the uncertainty of the number of *lí* we had to travel before

coming to a suitable resting-place. Since leaving the Wall we had reason to believe that instead of three lí to a mile, as on the Chinese side, the inhabitants counted only two, and as this made a material difference where the road was parcelled out by us into so many stages each of 120 lí—three of these to a mile—enquiries were frequent when the long day's allotment seemed never likely to be overcome by any amount of trotting and urging onward.

To our query of how many lí it still was to such and such a place, which we had resolved to make our evening's halt, some dotard old villager would look at us bewildered, with eyes staring and mouth a-gape, and unable to utter a word. 'Shin Shan, toh-sha lí lu?' would be repeatedly dinned into his venerable ears, until one almost gave up the attempt to make him understand his own language, and inform us how many lí it was to Shin Shan; and when about to leave in despair and vexation at the stupidity of the amazed bumpkin, there was little consolation or benefit to be derived from his suddenly coming to himself, and bawling out in an off-hand way, as he wheeled on his heel, 'Shin Shan is twenty lí, *or more.*'

The six-and-a-half miles would be carefully computed by the time it would take us to traverse a rugged patch of country. Mayhap a dreamy sort of a little village would lead us to hope that our day's toil was over, and that the inn about which we had been told at our last night's quarters, was ensconced somewhere in the short, tree-shaded street before us. 'Shumah te fang?' one of us would call to a browned son of toil enviously reclining on a rest-inviting natural couch near his cottage door, pretty confident that we had at last attained Shin Shan, and that the inn was ready to receive us. In vain, however. The never-absent pipe was unremittingly puffed away at as he listlessly looked at us and tried to think, and the question would be repeated again and again, each time more distinctly, slowly, and

emphatically, and each time with a larger admixture of that piquant *grasseyement* and profound, guttural enunciation that I believed the perfection of the spoken mandarin tongue.

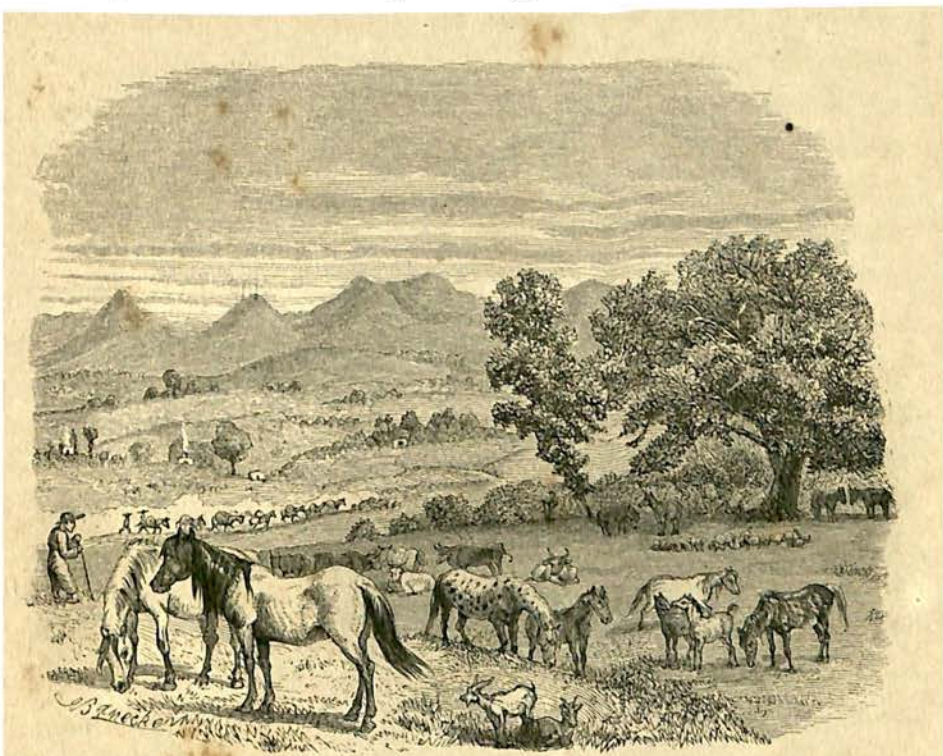
Banishing to unmentionable regions such a stupid race of people—for who so irritable and uncivil as a hungry and fatigued traveller—we would set ponies and cart in motion again, and when we had got almost beyond hail of our taciturn friend, would hear him halloo 'Shin Shan-*a*, it is *more* than twenty lí.'

'Kippletringan was distant at first a "*gey* bit," then the *gey* bit was "aiblins three miles;" then the three miles into "like a mile and a bittock," then into "four mile or thereawa." But it was a weary lang gate yet to Kippletringan, and unco heavy for foot passangers.' So we rehearsed, as we thought of Guy Mannering and his weary ride, when our distance seemed ever to be the twenty lí *and more*; and surely the vagueness of a dozen miles in Scotland or Ireland was never so tantalisingly manifested as in this day's ferreting out of Shin Shan beyond the Great Wall.

So it was long after dark, and some time had elapsed since we had seen the last ploughman in the fast vanishing twilight wending homeward with his plough, carried on a little wooden wheelless platform—dragged by his mixed string of animals, to preserve it from the wear of the road; before this distant 'fang' with its never-to-be-discovered house of entertainment was hailed, and our half-famished party joyfully put up in tolerable cleanliness and quiet.

Kinchow fu, the departmental town of one of the two divisions of the province of Shinking, and a town of the first order, was said to be only thirty lí, or about twelve miles distant from Shin Shan; though to the northward, and considerably off the direct course we had deemed it best to pursue. Still we had reasons strong enough to induce us to sacrifice half-a-day's time and labour to obtain some notion

of what is erroneously stated in a recent work on China to be the *port* of Moukden—the capital of Mantchuria—and, still greater mistake, only fifteen leagues from that city. Our carman heard the intimation with a frowning countenance and a very sluggish gait, and Ma-foo seemed more than usually put about; but there was no help for it on their side. Before the sun had time to show itself above the horizon, we were ascending the highland to the northward



Landscape in Mantchuria.

again, and climbing over rocky hills, and scampering over fields almost impassable by ruts and gaps, until at length we lighted upon what we were disposed to solace ourselves with as a real bit of Tartar scenery.

A fine piece of pasture land extends for somewhat about ten miles to the north and north-east, consisting of a long strip of level ground, with richly-green low sloping hills rising evenly to the foot of the lofty mountains about fifteen miles

off. It was speckled with large flocks and herds of cattle, ponies, sheep, goats, mules, donkeys, and pigs going to the hillsides and to the plain; producing a variety of sights and sounds quite pastoral and unique in this grain and vegetable growing land. When farm-houses with their low flat roofs almost screened by trees, and walls built of the stone cut from the neighbouring quarries, all but concealed by fences and stacks, peered out from some cheerful seclusion and sent their thin lines of blue smoke curling up into the cool morning sky, one could not help being reminded of the more fertile portions of the fells of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Yet there was the peculiarly wild and inimitable song of the solitary herdsman sounding strangely, but by no manner of means unpleasantly, in his retired post as he leant on his crutch-shaped stick; and the shrill squeak of a juvenile rustic who was lazily spreading himself out on the bare back of a shaggy pony which is attentively eyeing the movements of the erratic members of the herd, and the rider listlessly whiles away the early hours with this burlesque *concordia discors*. Healthy-looking but rather dirty men go skirling about as they with painful care gather up the much-prized fructifying element from behind the heels of the grazing quadrupeds, and deposit it in wicker baskets; the gowan and the buttercup spring up among the short herbage, and the smell of the meadow plants is extremely refreshing after a close night in a closer inn.

High up in the clouds, the lark circles and sings gushingly to the melancholy pe-weet of the startled lapwing, while the neighing of the ponies or the bleating of the sheep transports me once more to the island of the West. These ponies are larger than those I usually see, standing thirteen or fourteen hands high and well-proportioned; their colours are various, the lighter ones, especially white with bay, brown, or black spots, appear to be preferred. The cattle are not so

much amiss for a non-improving people, and are mostly of a light-red or bay colour, tolerable-sized but rather bony; they are not unlike the Irish breed of cattle, though finer skinned; and yet do not exhibit a tendency either to fatten, nor seem likely to prove good milk-givers, should their owners ever chance to test them in this quality, as they are generally flat-sided, light-bellied brutes, apparently bred only for purposes of draught. The sheep were the white-wooled, broad-tailed animals of the same stamp as those of the Cape of Good Hope and the Asiatic Steppes—excellent mutton, and as savoury as the tenderest rib of our own black-faced treasures. The goats differed in nothing from the shrivelled dwarfish toys we had met on our first day this side of the Wall; the pigs were as repulsively black and ugly as elsewhere; and the asses and mules in as good condition and well-cared-for trim as we found them everywhere.

We fell in with a long convoy going towards Shin Shan, composed of ponies, mules, and sturdy little donkeys, all carrying their loads on their backs, as the country was too heavy for wheeled vehicles; and no animals could get along better under the weight they carried than they did. The pack-saddles were worthy models for any director-general of army transport, and the packages were so carefully adjusted on each side of them that girths or surcingles were unnecessary. Some of the donkeys had as many as half-a-dozen half-empty bags of grain lying across their unprotected backs.

Turning to the eastward again—for we had been going almost due north—a fine prospect opened before us of a well-wooded plain stretching far away below, and in the middle, the notched walls of a city, and the prevalent well-defined wall-towers standing high above the trees. This was Kinchow—or as the natives pronounce it, Chin-chow, the second city in importance beyond the Wall. The view from the higher ground, just as the outline of the city is sighted, we thought

specially commendable, and would have been very guilty of an injustice to ourselves and to it, had we not drawn rein and indulged our vision for a few minutes.

Regaining the level, we soon found ourselves in the midst of cultivated fields in a forward state for an early harvest. Their banks — for here the fields were banked in from the road — were overspread with wild-flowers, among which we gladly single out the thistle, the wild-lavender, the sunflower, and the little blue forget-me-not sparkling here and there in the rank grass. The roadsides are thickly planted with old willows, laurels, and stray elms, and a large partially enclosed park of closely-set trees on our left was perhaps a promenade or pleasure resort for the townspeople, as we saw several well-dressed women stumping along with their arms in full swing to preserve their equilibrium, while they took their airing, and others were seated on low forms, having their forenoon's *on dit* or ramble into the murky precincts of the Hyrcynian wood. They were but slightly disturbed by our startling appearance so near them, for they scarcely yielded so much to fear or curiosity as to give our turbaned heads and black hairy faces more than a momentary squint before they resumed their tale.

The houses improved in exterior and size, the passengers along the side-paths became more numerous and better clad, kitchen gardens took the place of maize and millet, and everything foretold our approach to a large town. These were all in turn left behind; a wide waste of black quag-mirish ground lay between us and the south side of the city, with a rather broad, but now very shallow river—the Siau-ling-hô — running through it, but destitute of everything except some two light ferry boats in an ineffective state, and a long plank bridge laid on trestles spanning the sleepy waters for about 200 feet. This *hô* is easily forded, and in a few minutes, despite the awfully deep cesspools that forbade our advance, and nearly poisoned us when the wagon wheels

stirred them up, we were in the rancid tumbled-up suburb which we can unflinchingly pronounce to be, if possible, worse than any other suburb we have been inveigled into, for foul gases, fermenting filth, and muddy confusion.

Having got thus far, it became a serious question whether we could go on at all; as the ways were deadly sloughs more than axletree deep, and the news of our arrival having already been bruited abroad, the entire population seemed to have thought it their duty to leave everything to look and talk about us.

'What strange men!' 'what wonderful clothes!' 'what astonishing boots!' and 'what marvellous saddles and bridles!' were trifling exclamations compared to others ringing in our ears. There was no help for it but to send the cart on by an easier street to the opposite side of the town where we could meet it, and then make a hurried sally into the city.

The walls were in good repair, and offered nothing to our notice we had not already seen. The gates were wide and strong, but the great granite flags paving the way that led through them were sadly in need of repair or renewal. The city appeared to be nearly of a square form, and each side about half a mile in length. The guard-room was on our right immediately within the inner gate, and it exhibited a little more care and a better attempt at display than any other place of the kind we have yet seen in the land. It was raised three or four feet above the level of the street, and railed in front with gaudily painted spars and arm-racks, in which were a profusion of large bows and cases full of arrows, with swords and all varieties of ludicrously-shaped lances, bill-hooks, pole-axes, and pikes done up in brilliant colours. Within the little apartment some half dozen men, like field labourers or coolies, were so intent on gambling that they did or would not observe our entrance.

The street was moderately wide for a Chinese thoroughfare, and clean too; and the shops erected on each side of the

channeled way were many of them large and tidy. Those of most ample dimensions and business appearance were appropriated for the storing and sale of grain — the staple commodity; while the smaller tenements furnished the ordinary daily necessaries and luxuries consumed by the citizens. We penetrated as far as the centre of the town, where a lofty tower perforated by four gateways brought us to the junction of the four main streets, and to a point where as much of the place was visible as we cared about seeing. Close by was a main guard-room with a few unsoldier-like loons hanging about the door, and a snuffy-nosed petty officer anxiously awaiting our departure to mount a scraggy caparisoned galloway that snorted and plunged when we approached. This domestic warrior eyed us suspiciously, and rather ill-naturedly, I thought, but we were so busy in the crowd about us that we had no time to care much for his favour or displeasure.

There was a far greater attraction for us in an assemblage of stalls rigged up on the pavement under the archways. We made for them at once, as our ordinary every-day fare was becoming irksome, and the country inns afforded nothing beyond the detestable pig, garlic, and fowls in a state of marasmus, with eggs at times in the finishing stage of chemical metamorphosis. Gladdening to the eyes, and consoling to an often insulted stomach, was the sight of tastefully-arrayed quarters, legs, and loins of mutton suspended and laid out on the blue-cottoned butcher's temporary shop-front; and pregnant with savoury and nutritive reminiscences in the memory of a north-countryman was that display of neatly and well-singed sheeps' heads, ranked up on the narrow benches for the selection of customers. But most alluring of all were the baskets of peaches, nectarines, apples, and grapes displayed on every side on that hot forenoon.

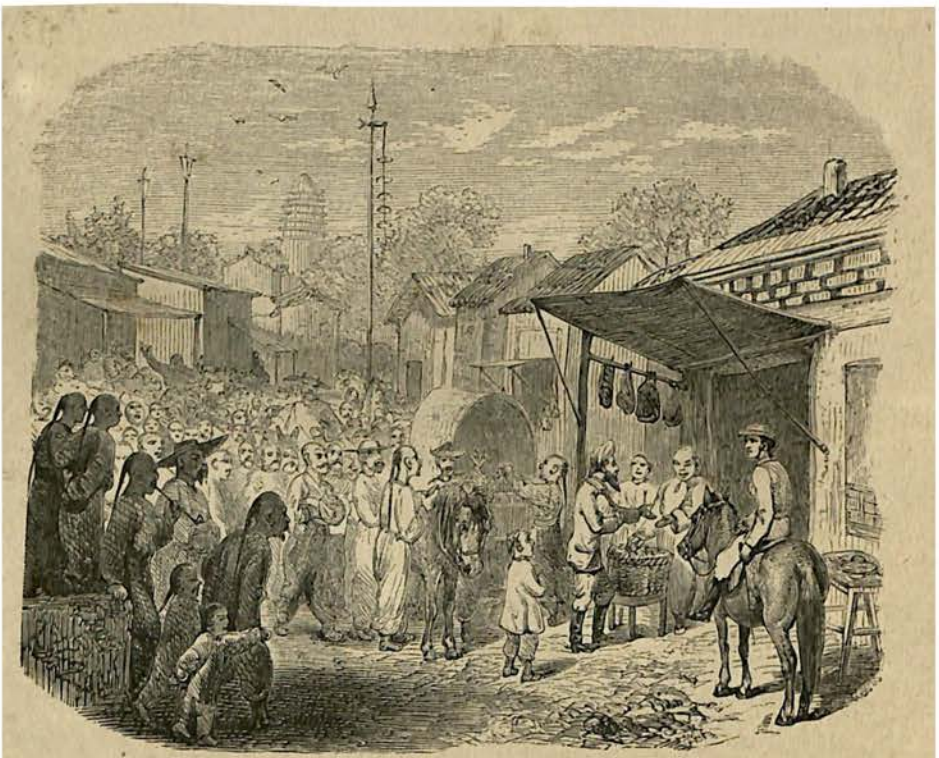
We had scarcely time to cast our eyes up each street,

and to note that the one to the east was crossed by lines from every shop, on which were fastened little triangular flags of various and bright colours, inscribed with the owners' names and occupations, giving the long vista quite a gala appearance. That to the west was inhabited by the poorer portion of the population, and contained what must have been at one time a splendid specimen of the North China pagoda, but which was now ruinous, having been stripped of the external covering of brickwork,—the internal foundation of earth and wooden transverse beams were alone remaining; while the street to the north was little better than a dirty lane through squalid cottages and smallware dealers' hovels.

We came to the conclusion that Kinchow was not the trading place we had been led to believe it was, but that it must rely for its business character on its port, which we inferred must be near the mouth of the river, some ten or twelve miles off. We gave, however, but little time for considering the subject, being rigorously intent on the purchase of fruit enough to fill every pocket and saddle-bag, and mutton-chops sufficient to give us a reparatory feast in the evening. The vendors of these goods were never, perhaps, more readily or liberally paid—though we could not complain of their charges, considering that mutton was sold to us for something less than a penny a pound, and fruit enough in quantity and quality to invalid half a regiment for about sixpence.

An immense concourse of people swarmed around us while we were initiating the butcher into the art of cutting mutton-chops, but they were remarkably civil, and said or did nothing that could give us the slightest offence. As they gathered in behind, they thrust those in front forward, and these resented the inconvenient pressure or crowding-in upon us, by setting up a counter squeeze, during which a

decently-clad young fellow was shoved over a bucket of water and got himself slightly saturated. Enraged at this, he vented his wrath on those immediately in his rear by scolding and dashing the water in handfulls over them, very much to the mirth and laughter of not only the bystanders but the sufferers themselves, who, instead of seeking reparation by a game of fisticuffs as an English rabble of the same



Victualling in Kinchow.

class would have done, seemed to enjoy the fun, and permitted us, the unwitting cause of the mishap, to depart in peace and plenty.

At some of the shop-doors, we saw what was, to us, a new variety of the lark species confined in cages, but as all were moulting, and the owners were removing them out of the way of the crowd, we had no chance of examining them. We could only discover that the people called this variety the

San-ma-chow, that the plumage on its back resembled very closely in markings that of the button quail, and that over each eye was an elliptical lemon-coloured line. Bird-collecting being then our favourite hobby, we were vexed that fortune had not favoured us here in obtaining a victim feathered sufficiently to warrant us in purchasing and preserving it for future comparison.

CHAPTER XXII.

RABID CURIOSITY — FILTHY HABITS OF THE PEOPLE — THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO THE PROPERTIES OF SOAP AND WATER — SHE-TSOU-TANG AT TIEN-TSIN — STEAMING CHINESE — COST OF VAPOUR BATH — PHYSICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE MEN OF NORTH CHINA — GOOD SERVICE — IGNORANCE OF THE GREAT ENGLISH NATION — CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO — WELLS OF TA-LING — MANTCHU HORSES — SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS.

EMERGING from the gate we had entered by, we passed eastward through another portion of the suburb, where we found the cart and our driver working up the minds of the groundlings to a pitch of rabid curiosity rather annoying than otherwise. But the *Yung-ro*—Sinensian for sheep's flesh—was safely deposited in the coolest and roomiest corner of the vehicle, the vegetables were hung from the frame of the cover, and guarding our treasures with an unusual degree of attention, we scrambled out of the uncomfortable locality, which possessed some large buildings we took, or mistook, for potteries.

All the womenkind were out to scrutinise us, and we had ample opportunity afforded to enable us to surmise that the morality of the place was not of the highest order, nor the feminine beauty or modesty other than of a very low type.

Meretricious looking Messalinas jeered and smiled wantonly towards us from beneath their indecorous masks of paint, as they uneasily tried to maintain themselves erect on their fashion-nipped feet, or leant against the walls or the shoulders of some debauched Lothario. It was, perhaps, as well that we did not understand much, if anything, of their

language. Everybody was piggishly dirty, and carried about an alluvial deposit of such a thickness, that one could scarcely forbear wondering they did not become fossilised within the muddy encasement daily and hourly accumulating about their persons.

The people of North China are certainly not addicted to tubbing, and of all of the Eastern races the Chinese in general are surely the most indifferent to personal cleanliness. At every step in one of their towns this is more and more apparent, and examine and enquire where and when you may, you can never discover at what time or where a Chinese performs his ablutions.

In the towns and villages I had passed through, especially in those situated on the banks of rivers, I looked in vain for wash-houses or yellow skins being scrubbed in the fresh flowing water; and since leaving the banks of the Peiho, had not been able to discover the faintest clue to lead me to suppose that they were at all cognisant of the properties of water and the virtues of soap.

Before my reaching so far northwards as Tien-tsin I undoubtedly thought so; and no account of bath-houses having been given in any books on China that had then fallen into my hands, and Europeans long residents in the country, of whom I enquired, having expressed their ignorance of, or unbelief in, the existence of any such establishments, it was with some degree of pleasurable surprise that I became aware of their presence in that city, and in good numbers, too; for—and I confess it with all due sincerity and humility—I had given up our garlic-eating friends, unconditionally, to be an uncleanly race, not only from what I had been told and had read about them, but from what I had observed of their habits; and I was fully prepared to affirm that the assertion made by physiologists regarding the renewal of the body in general, and the skin in particular every seven years, did not apply to any

of the citizens of the Central Empire, who seemed to me to possess a most remarkable antipathy to the practical study of the lavatory process, in relation to its effects on the cuticle. In short I had viewed them, after a due amount of consideration, as a very large portion of the human family afflicted with a marked hereditary hydrophobic tendency. I could not avoid coinciding in the opinion expressed by the poet, when he says that—

> 'Even from the body's purity, the mind
> Receives a secret sympathetic aid.'

So I determined to institute a full investigation into the matter without delay, and if I found that I had wronged the Chinese in this respect, and that the people who dwell 'outside' had done them no greater justice, to make all the amends in my power and give the results of my researches to the world. Yet I could not banish from my recollection the case of a certain domestic at Hong-Kong, whose facial pores during the summer weather appeared to be always undergoing the most active process of distillation, and whose lavations, so far as I could witness—and sometimes I could not avoid being spectator of them—were confined to the almost circular patch of senna-coloured cuticle that covers the queer assemblage of organs constituing a China boy's face. Unless, too, my eyes were deceived, this act was perpetrated in a well-known cooking utensil containing steaming hot, and probably greasy water, into which was dipped several times an article noted down in the maid-of-all-work's inventory as a dish-cloth, but which, in this instance, was made to serve as a swab. My note-book also mentions my having encountered, even in the streets of Peking, worthy dignitaries, wearers of high class buttons, who had, contrary to what is usually observed in those parts exposed and those hidden from the effects of sun and wind, a tolerably white face and an intolerably dirty neck.

It was not difficult to find many houses on the banks of the Peiho with flaunting advertisements in large black characters painted on the white-washed walls, extolling the clear and unpolluted quality of the water used within; though it was derived from a musty river, the common receptacle for every species of garbage. The first *She-tsou-tang* or 'Wash-body house' I sought to make the subject of enquiry, was standing in a busy alley above as nasty a *cloaca* as ever graced any part of the stream, and within the ordinary enclosing wall of brick. Entering by the narrow doorway from the street, I found myself in a little courtyard strewn about with tubs, and wood, millet-stalk fuel, and rubbish, and garnished with sundry sets of Chinese costume hung to dry or be aired on lines intersecting the limited space at various angles.

A small door, with a very small sign-board, between two others that flanked each end of a one-storied building, was pitched upon as the one to introduce myself by, and I pulled it rather suddenly open without any premonitory knock—for I fear such an obliging intimation was rare at Tien-tsin, when the men from beyond the seas wished to make an irruption into the abodes of the natives—to the no small surprise of the occupants, who jumped to their feet and stared. I was justly punished for my uncivil rashness by a simultaneous, and almost overwhelming attack on my visual and olfactory nerves—those salient and most vulnerable points so difficult to defend when assailed by Chinese smells and sights—as well as the sudden inhalation of a moist hot air, not at all agreeable to the lungs after leaving the cold dry atmosphere of a winter's day.

Yet I did not effect the hasty retreat that prudence and my outraged feelings dictated, but clung to my resolve with a desperation anything but worthy of the cause. After closing the door there, I was standing alone in a long narrow room—a companion who often assists in my explorations

having fairly ran away at the first sniff when the door was opened — that appeared to answer many purposes in this *maison de bains*, but principally those of a dressing and shaving-room. It was occupied at this time by about fifteen individuals, men and boys, nearly all of whom were in a state of *impuris naturalibus*, which condition they seemed to regard as quite a matter of course. Some were seated on narrow forms quietly looking about them, while their wet skins were being slowly and spontaneously dried by evaporation, for there seemed to be few if any towels in use, or even in the apartment. Others were having their setaceous scalps and tails operated upon by the household barbers, and one or two had surrendered themselves to the soporific influences of heat and exhaustion—influences more or less perceptibly at work on all of them.

On one side of the long building was a large piece of furniture with two rows of apertures, in which were placed the clothes of the customers, many of whom were earnestly intent in hunting for entomological specimens thereon. Two or three tables afforded accommodation for the perpetually at-work teapot, from which was poured into moderately-sized cups a small quantity of the grateful infusion, to be drank leisurely by the washed beings who smoked or reclined previous to going away, or to be gulped down by the reeking and panting men who issued from a room at the other end of the one I had entered in, and to which my attention was now directed.

I had not much time to remain in the establishment, however, for my heart was fast sinking within me; though I tried strongly to get over the repugnant sensations, and imagined I should become so soon accustomed to the malodorous interior as to stay in it long enough to see all. I was quickly undeceived; for when I made a dash for this chamber, and removing my fingers from the closed nostrils in order to drag open the door,—which was heavily weighted to

keep it shut, I found myself repulsed in the utmost trepidation by a cloud of steam of such an emetical flavour that all my firmness gave way. The door was banged to; and yet the heat, the steam, and the stench that had escaped in the brief lapse of time were of such a dreadfully penetrating and disagreeable character, that no amount of resolution could induce me to look within again.

I had, however, seen enough to enable me to make out a small room about twelve feet square, the floor of which was excavated and filled with very warm water to the height of the elbows of the crowd of men who, parboiled, gasping, and perspiring, were steeping themselves in the soupy ammoniacal fluid. It was a regular *Piscinum*, or plunge-bath full of vapour and fetid water, and strong-scented human bodies, raised to a temperature far above blood-heat, and which to me would have been quite insupportable.

Even the strong Chinese who had but just emerged from it were prostrated, and for some time they suffered a good deal from lassitude. Their faces were highly flushed, their hearts palpitated violently, and their pulse was nearly twice the natural number as they lay motionless in the *cooling* room. This plunge-bath was only for the poorer people, who could afford to pay no more than a few cash for their soaking and simmering; but at the opposite end was another little chamber, less obnoxious than the other, and paved with brick. This was maintained at a high temperature by flues underneath the floor, and these, with the steaming watery vapour, caused the perspiration to trickle down my face as I tried to watch the manipulations of a light-fingered chiropodist, who, with a mysterious collection of small tools, was doctoring the toes of a fat old tradesman in a gradual state of melting-down.

This was, without doubt, a better attempt at a bath-room, but still was very imperfect, and the whole thing was so utterly devoid of the luxuriousness and enjoyment that

must have attended the old Roman bath, or that follows the Turkish refreshening one gets in the bath-houses at Constantinople, that the wonder was why the place was patronised at all—the more especially as it possessed all the disadvantages of a bad vapour-bath in saturating the air with moisture, and giving rise to great derangement of the circulation and feverishness.'

At the best, the bath in China is certainly not looked upon as a social or religious institution, as we see it among other nations of the East, and those who were now employing it perhaps did so more to pass away an idle hour, secured from the cold without, than from any motives of cleanliness.

Before decamping, which I was glad to do after about ten minutes martyrdom, the landlord politely offered me tea from the public teapot, and the sole use of the heated room I had last seen at any time I chose—both of which invitations I declined as mildly as my nauseated stomach would permit. But before hurrying out, I gleaned from him that there were no fewer than thirty-two such bath-houses at Tien-tsin; that they were tolerably well frequented; that the charge for the lower orders in the scalding-room at the upper end was three cash for bathing, and three for shaving the head and combing and plaiting the queue, or about one-third of a penny for each visitor.

He also showed me a man suffering from rheumatism who was being shampooed by a professor of that treatment; the latter played a most wonderful fantasia in good time, and with every modification of sound, by means of palms, knuckles, thumbs, and sides of the hands, on the poor wretch's naked back. Following me to the grateful atmosphere of the courtyard, the proprietor led me to an underground cellar, where two men fed the fires with fuel that blazed away immediately beneath the reeking caldron overhead. I did not again risk my health in such buildings; and yet, after the unscoured mob that at Kinchow surrounded us, and whose skins were

but too frequently covered with all sorts of loathsome diseases, one could not but in charity regret that the like was not to be observed in some part of their town.

Getting clear of the large suburb and its murderous roads, we got on one of the nicest highways we had yet traversed, with good villages at frequent intervals.

The farther we passed to the north-east, the more, I think, the character of the people—physically, and perhaps also mentally—changed for the better. The men became finer, more stalwart, and more manly looking than they of the south; and though like the 'Achaian chief, for bulk conspicuous,' they were lusty and inclined to be a little plethoric and flabby, they carried themselves well; and their tall upright figures (some of them could not measure less than six feet two or three inches) their properly formed and graceful limbs and wide flat backs bespoke hale constitutions, a good climate, and immunity from those hereditary and acquired diseases, the effects of which one notices so often in the districts of the south.

Besides the height and corresponding muscular growth, their features differed much from those of the people about Canton, along the coast, and even up to Shanghai. It is a mistake to suppose that the Chinese physiognomy bears the same invariable monotony of outline and expression everywhere, that there is no appreciable difference between one Chinaman's face and another, and that a 'Coolie' from the banks of the Canton river, the Yang-tsze-kiang, or the Peiho must needs be identical in form and feature; ever the same plenilune face, the same inelegant arrest of nasal developement, the unvarying and characteristic width across the level-topped nose-bridge, and the willow-leaf slits, through which the sparkling jet-black eyes can be seen glistening and dancing.

This popular error is quite on a par with that of the Peking and Tien-tsin artists, who represented or caricatured

all Europeans as beings with vehemently florid complexions, hooked noses, sky-blue eyes, and hair—oh, travestied transcription!—of the most atrocious brick-red colour imaginable; and owes much, doubtless, to the great sameness with which the nation is costumed, the perpetual and universal mode of wearing the hair parted behind, shaving the front of the head and the eyebrows, and depriving the face of all its capillary growth, as well as to their rigid adherence to all outward forms and fashions the traveller observes, no matter in what part of the long narrow fringe of the empire he may be wending his way.

In reality, the physiognomical characteristics are perhaps as diverse, and as strictly localised—I only speak from my limited experience, but somewhat attentive observation—as we find them in Britain. This may be attributable in a very great measure to the difference in the habits of the people, rendered necessary by the nature of the climate, and the soils of the country, as well as to the stationary and quiescent tastes of the sons of Han, who seldom travel, and as seldom marry beyond their own district, or town.

In a southern city no two faces can be met in the crowded streets exactly alike, but the multitudes who throng backwards and forwards, from day-dawn until sunset, present as wide a contrast in their individual visages as could be found in Fleet Street or Cheapside.

And so it is in the north; but the faces there are inclining to oval; the orbicular outline disappears as one goes towards colder latitudes; the features become more and more aquiline, the eye-fissures less oblique and narrow, the mouths are better formed, and the cheekbones, the maxillary bones, or the teeth do not project to such an unsightly degree; while their skins are fairer and more like those of Southern Europeans, and can often be perceived to have a faint tinge of rosiness mantling out about the cheeks.

Contrary to the generally received opinion, we have many times about Peking, and all along our route, seen men who

had not attended to the calls of the barber so regularly as is the fashion, endowed with the rudiments of more than averaged sized whiskers of a few days' growth, and have met with others who had not only rusty or reddish-tinted moustaches, but queues also of the same colour, as well as eyes very closely approaching to hazel; and these exceptional departures from the natural standard were not considered as at all wonderful or extraordinary by the possessors or their friends.

Small hands and feet are the attributes of the men of the north, as well as those of the south; but the former would obtain the first rank should there be any dispute about superiority in this respect; while the other external traits are so marked that the latest new arrival in the country could with ease single out a Canton or Shanghai man in a crowd of Pekingese. If their mental faculties are less acute, and they be not gifted with so large an amount of intrepidity, low cunning, or stirring business minds, they are undoubtedly blest with a greater simplicity of heart, honesty of purpose, and a kindly straightforwardness almost unknown beyond the Shantung promontory. Their stupidity—as we were pleased to term their bluntness—and ignorance of our habits and tastes could be tolerated or remedied by patience and a little trouble, but the wily deceit of the southern kept us ever on the watch.

The ignorance of the country people we were now among certainly overwhelmed us altogether, and might have led us to form a very low estimate of their acquirements, especially concerning the worlds beyond their own remote province, had we not been aware of the torpidity of the Chinese mind in acquiring knowledge about affairs in which they could not look for profit, and the slow way in which information was spread when it became essential for the government to keep its own secrets or conceal its misfortunes.

For example, when passing along this fine wide road, our

driver, who was becoming very indifferent to everything save cash and a comfortable quarter for the night, carelessly drove one of the wheels of the cart over a big stone, which resulted in the vehicle's being thrown over and our party brought to a standstill, they being unable to get it righted again. This was near a large village, where the wonderful sight of such astounding mortals, who seemed to have dropped from the clouds, brought out the inmates of the tidy houses to look and gape.

We were in a difficulty—the cart was on its side, the mules were entangled in the harness and long traces, and our carter was raving and dancing about in the most helpless manner; so the strongest and youngest of the spectators were requested to assist in getting the machine adjusted. At first they were too much bewildered, looking at us, to heed any request or supplication, but this over, when they satisfied themselves that we were really flesh and blood and mortals like themselves, they stepped forward and soon the mishap was converted into an interesting chat with the big powerful fellows who had seized mules and carriage and put them in the way of going on in a few seconds.

One old gentleman with a sadly diminished tail, and white flowing moustache and beard, and who was evidently *the* man of the village, took the liberty to enquire what manner of men we were and where we came from. As on other occasions, the answer was that we were 'Men of the Great English Nation.'

Imagine our littleness, the diminution our British heads suffered, when the crowd stretched out their necks and opened their mouths wide to hear the answer to the old fellow's stupefying interrogation. 'What is the great English nation? Where is it?'

Could anyone conceive the existence of such 'crass ignorance' in any part of a civilised country, where a sharp and short war had brought a moiety of this English nation to within three hundred miles of the hamlet we now were in,

and had laid their own nation helpless, and at its mercy! Not to know, or have felt in some way or other, or even have heard of the presence of that 'little body with the mighty heart;' that small but invincible polypus, whose vigorous *tentacles* grapple the nearest and most distant corners of the earth; not to have listened to a whisper regarding the merits or defects of that 'precious stone set in the silver sea' of the Far West, was ignorance, to us, indeed, and at that time particularly humiliating; and never before did we experience such a sensation.

If other proofs were needed, surely this was sufficient to convince us that we had at last got beyond the beaten track, the invincible reputation, and the universal homage that we flattered ourselves was the Briton's own right all over the globe. It would have been a loss of time to attempt the enlightenment of such *lost* creatures; so, I think, after telling them that England was a country lying in the great ocean far, far under the Western Heavens, where the sun was then fast sinking, we left them, shorn of a good part, we are free to confess, of our national vanity.

There was a great change in the demeanour and physical qualities of these people, and a very peculiarly marked difference in the language spoken by them, with regard to its harsh-sounding words and altered intonation—so closely indeed it resembled our own, that when two or three persons were talking in a loud voice a little way off one could scarcely dispel the thought that we were listening to some of our own countrymen, or were travelling in some of the more remote parts of Scotland where the guttural *cht*'s, *gh*'s, the tirling *r*'s, never heard in the south of China, and the rugged aspirates with which the consonants are wrapped up in the north country *patois* were still familiar to us.

All this, we thought, must prove that we had at last got amongst the Tartars, and that any little approximation they might bear to the polished individuals on the China side of

the Wall was owing to their intercourse with each other, and to the insidious power of Chinese commerce and Chinese industry. But no; everywhere we enquired the Mantchu-*rin**—the *r* substituted for the *y* in use on the west side of the 'Barrier'—was unknown; each villager seemed rather to think we were joking him, or trying to depreciate his social *status* when we blandly asked him if he was a Tartar, or if any Tartars dwelt in his village. He was a 'Chung-kwoh-rin'—a 'Middle Kingdom man'—and did not know anything about 'Mantchu-rins,' and shaking his head as if he were rather disgusted with our civil query, would resume his elaborate scrutiny of our persons.

We had not yet reached the conquerors of the Great Kingdom; we were still amongst the Chinese, who had absorbed all the wealth, all the influence, and all the country even, in the land of the conqueror. Surely in the capital of the Mantchu race we should find them dominant, and after all our labour and fatigue be able to satisfy ourselves that such a people really held sway in their own country! The Chinese could surely not be the same brisk business merchants, the same indefatigable toilers, the same controlling element everywhere, we were fondly hoping—for we were quite willing to exchange them for another race, and were ready for almost any extreme, so long as we could lead ourselves to believe that we had left China behind, and were in reality *beyond* the Great Wall.

What struck us everywhere was the large per centage of very old men lingering on the outskirts of their homes, and looking as if life had not yet become tiresome to them, nor its cares and toils an insupportable burden; their ages we did not seek to know, nor yet those of the many old women who tottered about the doorways, some of them very much disfigured by that unsightly enlargement of the thyroid gland of the neck, called *goitre*, which they took no pains to

Mantchu-*man*.

conceal, and from which the male sex appeared to be exempt, for we remembered the rhyme—

> 'The age of man is threescore years and ten,
> But that of an old woman nobody knows when

And another thing that attracted our attention very much was the all-prevalent habit of tobacco-smoking, indulged in by everybody, at all hours, and in all situations. From the child scarcely yet beyond the threshold of infancy to the young maid, the mother and the grandmother, in the feminine; and from the toddling boy of four or five years old to the great-grandfather verging on a century in the masculine gender, all use the tobacco-pipe constantly. Every garden has its allotted space for the growth of the plant, no duty is imposed on its consumption, and no preparation, save drying carefully, is needed to render it fit for smoking; and the population takes so early and so kindly to the influence of the gentle weed, that it looks rather fighting against inward belief to suppose that the custom was introduced from beyond China.

In truth, the people look as if they had been smoking since the far back times of the fabulous Fohi. If we are to credit some authors, the Chinese must have known tobacco long before it was first observed at St. Domingo in A.D. 1496, for the word *tobacco* is its ancient name used by them to express the idea of tobacco; and the Chinese characters signifying this article have been found in a book which has been in existence more than a thousand years. Even now in Mongolia there is no other name for the narcotic; so that when the blustering Spaniard was getting over his nausea, and beginning to relish the agreeable sensations of the *new* luxury at Yucatan in the commencement of the sixteenth century, and Hawkins, Raleigh, and Drake were introducing it to the notice of their countrymen, and throwing out wondrous clouds of smoke in a semi-torpid

state of novel enjoyment, our mild Chinaman, his wife, and the youngest of his progeny, were thoroughly seasoned to its use, had been so for generations past, and had smoked the finely powdered leaf in these dwarf-headed pipes which give but two or three whiffs before they require replenishing.

So fixed and constitutional has the habit become, that we should not wonder to hear that it would require many royal counterblasts from the ruler of the Empire, and volumes of servile satirical poems from pet poets of royalty, with the excommunications and persecutions of pope, peer, and autocrat, to prohibit a usage which appears to have become a necessary function of life with all classes of the people. The tinder, the flint, and the steel, with the pipe and tobacco-pouch, are an essential and never absent addition to every man's costume; and even the nobility, when they are carried out in their chairs, have these implements suspended near them. The first thing in the morning and the last act at night; the earliest manœuvre on entering a room, and the finishing one in quitting it, is to fill the everlasting calamut, and smoke it with as staid and contented an air as possible.

Truly it seems with them that—

> 'To rich or poor, in peace or strife,
> It smooths the rugged path of life.'

Did it not destroy their teeth, and by the prejudicial way in which they inhale the smoke and expel it through their nostrils, cause them to make such abominable noises at the back part of their throats, one could scarcely find fault with the practice, which appears moreover to be quite in keeping with the lymphatic temperament of the smoke-makers.

Nothing seemed so odd and yet so natural as to witness a whole household—men, women, and children—seated before their door, and looking quite sedate as they sent out the quickly succeeding jets of reek, without attempting to break

the dead silence that the social indulgence needed to produce its harmonising effect.

Towards evening we were passing over high ground again, and felt relieved when the excellent water drawn from the wells of Ta-ling—a very large village or small town situated in a most agreeable locality—had been swallowed by the half-gallon. Some of the inns were good, and looked inviting, but we had still some four or five miles of the day's forty-five to finish before we could rest ourselves. We, therefore, reluctantly left them behind. At the door of one of them stood three remarkably fine ponies—one, a chestnut, was particularly neat and active looking.

We descended to the plain once more, about a mile from the town, and came to the Ta-ling hô, a dull muddy river running through a marshy melancholy waste, where the scanty fields of grain on either side were highly banked up with earth to keep out the water during the flood seasons. There was nothing at all in the place to deserve attention; but in the palmy days of the Mantchus, some two centuries ago, in the neighbourhood of this river, and in that of the Liau hô, which we were approaching day by day, there were more than forty establishments or studs for breeding horses, then the greatest riches of the Tartars, and for which a Mantchu had more care than for himself.

In a somewhat rare and curious book* published in Paris, in 1770, containing an eulogistic poem on the capital city of Mantchuria and its neighbourhood, composed by the learned Emperor Kienloong, printed in sixty-four different forms of Chinese writing, and translated from the Mantchu language by the father Amiot, his Majesty says, 'the pleasant banks of the Ta-ling hô, and the great country that it waters, are the places most suitable for the location of studs. The mildness of the climate, added to the good qualities of the water,

* Eloge de la Ville de Moukden et de ses environs; Poeme composé par Kienlung. Traduit par Amiot. Paris, 1770.

renders the pasturage fattening and of a most agreeable quality. In the beginning of the spring, the underground sources of the river commence to rise and spread, and accelerating the growth of the grass, covering it always with a genial dew which keeps it tender. In the hottest time of summer, there reigns in this region a perpetual salutary freshness that banishes from it those annoying insects so common in the low and damp districts.

'It is here, in these delicious prairies, where can be multiplied to an infinite degree the superb races of the different kinds of sorrel-coloured steeds, the graceful light bays, the golden bays, and the deep brown shades, with the piebalds and other mixtures. Is it then a matter of surprise that we should have horses without number, of all kinds and of all qualities? If those which are for racing purposes have a swiftness without comparison; if those which are for parade have a step so majestic, an expression so noble and characteristic; if those which are destined to draw our chariots and to bear our burthens, or to perform our heaviest labours, are most vigorous and indefatigable? No; we are not telling an untruth when we aver that the Mantchu horses are, in every respect, the first and best horses in the universe. Assuredly the attention paid to preserve them from all deteriorating influences; the multiplied cares taken to procure for them at all seasons good pasturage; and the rest and the freedom we leave them to enjoy at certain times for the reparation of their strength, or to refresh them after their fatigues, ought to render them such.'

This rather highflown effusion was written in those days when the Mantchus were formidable; when entire villages were given up to the soldiers of Mantchuria, in which they exercised their military evolutions with perfect freedom, and always with the advantage of having good forage for their horses — for the Mantchu army was almost, if not entirely, composed of cavalry. Nowadays, however, the

face of the country must have become altered very much, and those agricultural, or rather pastoral, warriors have either died out, or betaken themselves to some other distant province, for we could never catch the slightest clue to any of them or their haunts.

It was necessary for us to look out for a ford, as the river and its banks looked suspiciously deep and soft; so we bent our way a little southward where a small house, like a ferry station, promised us something of the kind. The locality was very lonely and bleak, and though in other places, throughout the day's journey, the population appeared to be pretty well diffused, and somebody was always on the move, here all seemed deserted.

Looking back towards the village, we were rather surprised to find three horsemen coming rapidly behind us, mounted on the ponies we had so much admired at the inn door. When they saw that we had noticed them, one of the three wheeled suddenly round and galloped off in the opposite direction, leaving the two to overtake us, which they certainly were not long in doing. I, being the hindermost of our little train, came first in contact with them, and had but brief space allowed me to scrutinise their exteriors before a conversation was attempted by the one who was the best mounted, and on the good-looking chestnut too.

He was well—even stylishly—dressed in a long robe of light-blue figured silk, spotlessly-white socks and faultlessly-shaped shoes. This man had a peculiarly southern look about him, quite uncommon on the eastern side of the Wall. His head was carefully shaved, and his tail hung down between the shoulders in a long glossy plait, much too fine for such a rude district; while his features were thoroughly those of Canton, and covered by a thin translucent skin of a yellow beeswaxy tinge, quite foreign to the North. There was a very peculiar glance of cunning and deceit in the ever-moving black eyes, as they darted over me and my

horse, and settled at last on the saddle and saddle-bags; but his voice puzzled me altogether as he came close up and brusquely addressed some question—it was so thin and shrill, and so very distinct in its every tone, and yet so very strange sounding that I could not comprehend a word of the tongue or dialect in which he spoke.

His companion was a jolly-looking fellow with lots of dash about him, though he was rather stout, and kept aloof from us. He was not so well dressed as our *quasi* friend, and wore a blue turban twisted round the upper part of his great swarthy bullet head, after the fashion of the Fuhkienese—who to this day hide their badge of submission to the Mantchu rule by concealing their shorn scalps and crinal appendages with a covering of this description. He tried to look indifferent to us, and yet I caught him several times scanning minutely ourselves and cart. He of the gay coat put a question to me which I could not make out—for the accent was altogether mystifying, and the sounds nasal and unpleasant in my ears.

I told him I did not understand his speech, though I partly guessed he wished to know where we came from. Still he repeated the question several times with a forwardness and pertinacity I did not like. At last he left me, and passing the cart—into which he very impudently peered—he rode up to M., who was leisurely riding on before, and began the same obtrusive enquiry. M. understood him a little, though his confidence in the man was far from being great. Abruptly he asked 'Where did we come from, and where were we going to? What had we in the cart, and how many dollars did we carry?'

Unconsciously I caught my hand unbuckling the retaining strap of the right-hand saddle-bag, in which the dispeller of six nestled securely, and already grasped the comfortable butt of the weapon—'and what might I have in the bag he saw me opening?' M. was very cool and civil, and tried to

answer him as well as he could, though cautiously and slowly, as if he had a difficulty in comprehending his meaning—which, perhaps, he had.

'Had we any more men, and how many?' he finally queried, as he looked away up the road seemingly expecting some more of us to make their appearance. Now the similarity in sound between the words *yin*, man, and *tien*, days, perplexed M., who luckily thought it was days he meant, and answered twelve—as that was the time we had been on the road. The stranger's face betrayed instant disappointment, and he addressed Ma-foo — the groom — in a diminished air of haughtiness, though yet in a somewhat rude manner. Seeing he could elicit no satisfactory information from him—for the crafty little man was evidently strongly suspicious of the character and occupation of his interrogator, and parried his questions very adroitly—he started off with his silent friend towards the ferry-house near which we now were, shouting out that the river was too deep and dangerous to ford, and that there were no boats.

Curiously enough, about a dozen scampish-looking rascals appeared all at once around the doorway. The inquisitive gentlemen halted and dismounted among them, and began a lively discussion concerning something of importance, which evidently did not please them. There was no ferry-boat, and nothing was left to us but either to stand the chances of an encounter with this gang, or swamp, swim, or ford the river as well as we could.

It did not require a second's consideration to choose the latter, and in a very few minutes we had plunged through the deepest part, and were gaining shallow ground on the opposite side.

The boldness of our resolve quite astonished the ragamuffins we had left behind, for they stood looking after us a long time, until the tall millet of the tilled ground hid us from their gaze. Still we looked wistfully up and down

every narrow lane, and behind the houses and fences of the villages we came to, ready for any sudden emergency—for the place was so suitable for an attack, and the whole business wore such a dubious character, that we were constrained to be on our guard, and to exhibit as much discretion and self-command as possible.

The darkness that set in soon after did not reassure us, and we toiled on across another small stream, and through a murky chaos of broken ground and fields that set our means of keeping on the path almost at defiance, momentarily expecting some alarm, when, heartily tired, we found a large inn under the lee of a long ridge of sandhills; and making sure that it contained no vestige of our enterprising friends, or anything on which we could ground a doubt, we sought its shelter for the night. The courtyard was a very large place, surrounded on three sides by the ordinary small single-storied rooms appropriated by numerous travellers, with very showy fronts, and dusty interiors strongly impregnated with the villanous smell of the native spirit, samshu.

The yard was filled with some score teams of pack-mules and ponies, feeding out of huge stone troughs, and dozens of dusty men smoking or eating their evening meal, seated on the ground out of doors; as well as with heavy and light carts strewn and blocked up in every corner.

We, of course, tried to get the best unoccupied rooms in the establishment, but officials and travelling merchants had arrived before us, and our choice was limited to three vile places into which fresh air had not been admitted for years. Fixing on one of them, the walls of which showed tasteful designs in China ink by some amateur, and verses of poetry illustrating the beauties of little cottages built in rice swamps under the leaves of willows and surrounded by bamboos, we thrust open the windows, much to the dismay of the attendants, who must have thought we were mad, and began slaying all the lively spiders and scorpions found out of their

dens in the ledges and crevices. We soon had dinner, and then, preparing for any unwelcome visit from without during the night, laid ourselves out to sleep.

The thunder and lightning during many hours was quite appalling, and kept us awake for a long time, but sleep came at last. The weariness induced by our long seats in the saddle sent us into a blissful oblivion, undisturbed by any thieves or cut-throats who might have made the village of To-lo-po-tenza their lurking-place.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EARLY HOURS — GRANITE HOUSES — CARRIERS' CARTS — FEAR OF HIGHWAYMEN — MARSHY COUNTRY — SALT MANUFACTORIES AT TEN-SHA-HOR — A FUNERAL PARTY — NORTH CHINA SONG-BIRDS — THEIR CAPTURE, TREATMENT, AND QUALITIES — TRAINED FALCONS FOR BIRD-CATCHING — THE PE-LING — THE WHA-MÍ — A FIXTURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

NO matter however early in the morning we contrived to get up, our fellow-travellers were sure to be away on their journey long before us, and with so little sound of preparation as scarcely to disturb our repose. This morning the yard was quite untenanted when four o'clock found us getting ready to depart, and rather ashamed at being the last to leave, we were more so when six o'clock saw us only moving through the gateway: this was partly owing to the sulkiness of the carman, who was in a shocking bad temper because he had prematurely insisted upon, but did not obtain, the second half of the contract-hire agreed to be paid to him on reaching our journey's end, and partly to the rebellious dispositions of the two mules, who behaved themselves so badly when being harnessed and put in the traces, that the cross-grained driver was nearly worried out of his senses.

Not many miles after leaving this village with the unpronounceably long name, we came to another one, that had been erected with taste and a view to durability, as well as with a strong leaning to the curious and fanciful — for every house and garden wall was strongly built of cream-coloured granite, in which the feldspar was nearly, if not altogether absent, and the larger pieces of which, disposed to face the outer courses, were covered with beautifully distinct arborescent markings

of black oxide of manganese delineated exactly like a fossil plant.

I had the good fortune to pick up two or three specimens lying in the road, and of course a rush of surprised villagers was made towards me, as I dismounted to pack them in my saddle-bags, to see whatever I was going to do with the useless pieces of stone. Their observations to each other were possibly laughable enough, and perhaps the conversion of the petrous materials into medicine was not at all beyond their imaginings.

A few miles farther on, we had some intricate piloting to steer safely through the long single street of another village —Shin-shan Shan—where a crowd of carriers' carts laden with large bales of goods, which one of the drivers told us was *yang pu*, or 'foreign cloth,' were halted to refresh the already tired horses on their way towards the Great Wall.

At this place, where the long range of mountains (our constant and yet ever-varying companions since leaving Tien-tsin) terminates by a very lofty needle-like scar of greyish-blue rock, standing a little apart from the main chain, the road divides into two branches. One circling away to the northwards was the highway to the capital city of Mantchuria; the other, bending a little to the south-east, led to Newchwang, the new treaty port of the distant north, as we believed and relied on as the place where we were again to see Europeans, and rest ourselves before going farther on. As luck would have it, our blundering carter selected the wrong road of the two, and took us along that to Moukden half a dozen miles before we thought of enquiring; and then to gain a shorter way back to the proper track we floundered about for nearly two hours among the fields and mazy little lanes.

Since our adventure with the two mysterious strangers at the Ta-ling hô the previous evening, Ma-foo had been rather fussy and odd in his speech and behaviour, and when we

were riding at a quickened pace on a very lonesome part of the way indeed, he, half in dread, whispered to us to get our arms ready quickly, as the country thereabouts was infested by wicked robbers, who were mounted on the tallest and fleetest horses, and were very bold. There was little getting ready needed, as our revolvers were always at hand. My companion released the very reliable cut-and-thrust Japanese short sword from the rug it was wrapped in all day, and disposed it in a most convenient fashion in front of the cart.

The country was becoming so bare and miserable, and so barren in interest, that a romantic tussle with a manageable number of Chinese Turpins would have been rather a *desideratum* than otherwise, and we almost began to long for a sight of such formidable marauders; but our taste for excitement was, fortunately, perhaps, not indulged by any such meetings, and we had to move along drearily through a long low marsh, as level as a bowling-green, with slimy pools of brackish water tenanted by curlews and gulls, the spotted red-shank, the night-heron, the bar-tailed godwit, the water rail, and the funny little green dwarf bittern (*Botaurus minutus*), and on seemingly endless acres of blackish bog — quaggy and treacherous, often, for our ponies and the cart — covered with heath, over which isolated droves of ponies wandered, and the plover sent out its melancholy wail.

The hamlets were few and far between, and boasted of nothing but mud walls and misery. Sometimes we were enlivened by a few yards' ride after a small hare, or took a revolver *pot*-shot at odd collections of wild geese or ducks, but without inflicting any serious bodily harm on them. The few people we saw were very poor and awfully dirty, yet the females clung to the extremity of fashion and limped about on the small feet as if they were determined to brave even poverty to maintain their deformed notion.

Since leaving the hills we found the humblest houses built of mud, mixed with chopped straw to hold it together; and

others, a degree better, were rigged up with the unbaked, or rather sun-dried bricks one saw so frequently laid out where they had been manufactured—just as the houses of Mesopotamia are at the present day, and as they were in ancient Babylonia. Occasionally we see a muddy being, tempering the clay and mixing it with chopped millet-straw—quite after the manner of the aboriginal Syrian—before he moulded it into the large flat bricks so easily built and cemented together.

The ground at last even began to lose its covering of heath, wide stretches of land lay before us quite impracticable for man and beast; and bottomless quagmires, into which we might at any moment have been plunged and lost, were on either hand—so that we had long détours to make, and great semicircles to describe, in following the right direction.

The vegetation disappeared altogether, and the brown earth became encrusted with a thick efflorescence of salt. Here the preparation of this useful condiment began, and near the villages immense rectangular stacks, about twelve or eighteen feet high, were reared in lines, consisting of a thick covering of smoothly-plastered mud enclosing the much-prized article of commerce. This might be, we calculated, about thirty miles from the waters of the gulf.

We were much annoyed at having made so little progress before the midday breakfast-hour, and yet we had much to be thankful for, as had the weather broken, and a heavy shower of rain come down, we should have been worse off. Never was a poorer collection of inns or houses anywhere, for they could scarcely afford accommodation to the veriest beggar. Often and over again we went out of our way to reach a village where we might halt for two hours, but each time without a chance of getting a house fit to put a donkey in.

One place larger than the rest—Ten-sha-hor—with acres of salt stacks ranged out like burial-mounds, gave us the only opportunity, though a pitiable one. But there was a

funeral going on, and howls and lamentations, outrageous and derisive enough for an Irish wake, bellowed out from a house opposite the dirty hostel. Numbers of women and children in white, with white bands round their heads and artificial white flowers fastened on them, thronged outside the door of the house of mourning, and shrill music not at all unlike that from the Irish bagpipe, with the doleful half-dozen notes of the flute and tomming of the little drums, sounded strangely so near the dead. The procession issued from the house of mourning, and the poor lame women limping painfully over the uneven ground proceeded to a little altar in which a boy, smiling and playful, was lighting some incense sticks to propitiate Foh. All the way they sobbed and howled in the greatest tribulation, until reaching the steps of the small edifice, they knelt down and knocked heads several times against the bricks, then got up and began to laugh and titter as if nothing had been the matter.

At first we felt inclined to respect their grief and sympathise with their bereavement, but seeing that it was but the semblance of sincerity and a mere fashion, we thought no more about them. We might have remembered reading in their records of how in the time of the Luh Chaou (A.D. 552), there were persons to assist to weep at funerals; but finally the bereaved came to the disgraceful practice of hiring certain people to weep for them. Something of the sort was evidently going on here.

We breakfasted in a back kitchen foul and filthy, and with an atmosphere made so heavy by the pungent sickly smell of the native spirit, samshu, as to be barely respirable. The wretched landlord was a dealer in all kinds of stomach-ruining goods, and greatest of all in the fiery alcohol, that he kept in vats carefully fastened against the wall, and surrounded with the small pewter measures in which he served it. We did not stay long here, but just sufficient time to enable Ma-foo, the good Catholic, to imbibe—along with the driver

—enough of the brain-bewildering stuff to set them both maudlin and forgetful of everything save more liquor.

In the afternoon the roads became dreadful, and the whole country low and wet. Where they were all but impassable, some attempts were made to drain off a portion of the water into wide ditches, which were bridged over by felled trees, and paved by bundles of the all-subservient millet-stalk. We crossed several small streams, and a pretty considerable river, almost as wide as the Peiho, and apparently subjected to the influence of the tides. There were no boats on it, however, though the high wide-spanning wooden bridge, constructed of strong beams of timber, along which we passed, would have allowed moderately-tall junk-masts to go underneath.

It was in vain that we tried to get the designations of these *hô*'s; for the natives were so dull and stupid as not to be able to tell us what names they bore, or even those of the half-immerged villages, where poverty and neglect were only too conspicuous.

Yet in these hovels the great fancy of the Northern Chinese for song-birds prevailed; and in the most degraded den of mud, plastered up like a martin's nest, where the occupants, one would be inclined to say, could not find accommodation or food enough for themselves to keep nature together, the cage and the warbler would almost as certainly be met with as the inevitable destitution and dirt. No other people could be fonder of, more attentive to, or understand better the habits and the treatment necessary for the preservation in health of cage-birds, as well as the way to domesticate them, so as to make them retain their un-saddened song when caught wild. This is a pleasant trait to observe, and the more so as kindness is the prevailing ingredient in the work; and the little favourites always look as happy and gay in their bondage as if they never had known liberty. There is such a great variety of birds whose song is

fine and varied, that the Chinese have an abundance to choose from, and always select what we should consider the best.

Canaries are unknown, and many of our birds are not to be found, but there is a remarkable mixture of Himalayan, tropical, and Japanese specimens which arrive when the cold winter has passed away. These remain for a brief space, until the heat of the plain becomes too intense for them, and then they wing their flight towards the mountains and the more temperate provinces, returning in the autumn, when the fierce summer has passed, and before the very cold weather sets in. These are the busy times for the bird-dealers; and the markets are literally crowded with the baskets and cages full of the captured victims, as well as with dozens of choice specimens carried about for sale on perches.

Boys and men go off to the woods to pursue their brief vocation, armed with long bamboo rods, fitting into each other, and the ends smeared over with a kind of gum, more tenacious than bird-lime. Taking post alongside the trunk of a tree under the wide branches, they wait until they see an unwary warbler perch itself fearlessly on a twig. No sooner has it done so than it receives a gentle tap on the shoulder, and, ere a minute has elapsed, it is transferred to a wide basket covered with cotton stuff.

But the most expert and artful bird-catchers are they who employ the yellow-footed or peregrine falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), and the hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)—which was formerly used to hunt small birds in our own country. These hawks are hooded, and their wings are confined by the brail until the very moment they are wanted. On the left wrist of the hunter is strapped a neat reel filled with fine but strong twine, one end of which is tied to one of the falcon's legs. Whenever the quick eye of the dealer sees a bird on the ground the brail is removed, the hood slipped off, and the bird's head being turned in the direction of the prey, a jerk of the arm sends him off, the reel spins round, and before the

incautious feeder has time to move a wing it is prostrate, and the hawk standing proudly above, holding it down to the ground with the extended claws of one foot, while the skillful man runs towards the spot, reminding the victor by a gentle tug of the string, as he approaches, that in his victory he is to be merciful to the vanquished. Not so much as a feather is damaged by these well-trained birds; indeed, the most perfect ornithological specimens to be procured in the markets are those caught by falcons.

It is astonishing the number of birds a boy with one hawk will capture in a day. He has a lot of little bags, with a square bit of wood in the bottom, into which he thrusts the seizures as soon as he has made them; and at the end of his day's labour you may see him coming into the town surrounded by these receptacles slung to his waistband.

When brought to the market, if to be kept or sold on a perch, and made pets of, the terrified unfortunates are seized in the gentle grasp of their owner, and plunged into a bucket of cold water once or twice. This *Rareyfying* is successful; the bird, instead of being frightened to death by such an apparently cruel ordeal, calms down rapidly, looks stupid for a little bit, and then settles on a perch without any signs of alarm or timidity. In a day or two it will recognise the call of its favourite master; will have permission to fly away for a short distance, and then return to the wrist or the spar on being called, and do other little feats rather surprising for the short time it has been in training.

All the cage-birds are, I think, caught in the fields and woods by glue and hawk, for I never could discover if the Chinese practised, or were acquainted with, the breeding and rearing small birds in confinement.

Foremost of all the captive minstrels, for the loudness and surprising melody pealed forth from its little throat, in resounding,—almost uproarious, bursts of glee, is the North China lark—the *Pe-ling*—the 'hundred-spirited bird' (*Mela-*

nocorypha Mongolica), undoubtedly the most industrious vocalist, as it is the cheeriest of all Chinese birds. On it is lavished the greatest amount of admiration and tender care; and the poorest householder thinks himself well provided when he can sit and listen to the inspiriting chaunt of his own *Pe-ling.*

Right well and gratefully it repays the esteem manifested towards it, and the watchful solicitude with which its wants are all anticipated by its enraptured guardians; for surely never did feathered minnesinger, pent within a tiny circular apartment with a low roof, and surrounded by closely-set bars of bamboo laths, warble such a pleasant ditty or carol such ravishing concord. To see the little creature in a perpetual state of motion, circling round, now on one side,—with his yellowish-white breast barred by a black collar fully exposed to view; then on the other—showing his rusty-coloured back; upon the miniature circular platform raised for it in the middle of the floor, or springing up with joy against the tassels of red silk, charitably suspended from the roof of the cage to warn the heedless musician of danger in his impassioned gestures and dulcet flights, and then going down again, and round and round; one can but say that the 'hundred-spirited' bird is worthy of the title, for its legs and wings appear never to be tired; and to hear its everlasting lay launched out in every street with undiminished vigour and harmony, from sunrise until after sunset, in that limited space, the inclination is strong to believe that the happy creature is still singing over its nest in the fields, and has never been subjected to the spirit-breaking sadness of such an unnatural round-house.

It is difficult to purchase a good Mongolian lark in any of the towns—their proprietors sometimes refusing altogether to sell their pets—and when it is a good imitator, and can be bought, it will bring a large price. The market value of a lark that will imitate the mewing of a cat nine times—and the imitation is often so complete as to defy the criticism

of the most sensitive ear, is thirty dollars—over six pounds. And there is, next in value, the brownish-yellow Crying Thrush, with the white eyebrow,—the *Wha-mí*, or 'pictured eyebrow' (*Garrulax Sinensis*), one of the state prisoners to be found at nearly every door, and a bird of some price when in good voice. This thrush the Chinese are very fond of, and its mellifluous notes, so full and free, like those of our own song thrush, trilled *con amore* after the heat of the hot summer day has passed, when it seems to exult in the diminished temperature, possesses something like enchantment for our celestial friends.

It is richest in sweet melody in the gloaming, its few notes ringing out with startling beauty at that time, and its society is then most courted. An aged Chinese friend of mine, who had kept a *wha-mí* in perfect song for some years, used to be visited towards sunset by a tottering old man, who carried his pet thrush in its cage for a distance of some two miles, catching for it grasshoppers and insects by the way, merely for the sake of hearing its voice in competition with that of the other bird.

No sooner were the two brought near each other in the open air, than the first note from either of them excited the most active musical tussle, which would continue for half an hour or more in the centre of a crowd of admiring Chinese, who would never be tired listening to their vocal exertions. Other members of the thrush family are domesticated, such as the Blue Rock Thrush (*Petrocincla cyanus*), the Pallid Thrush (*Turdus pallidus*), and the Siberian Thrush (*Turdus Sibericus*), all of which are numerous around Tien-tsin and Peking;* but they all yield in estimation to the Crying Thrush.

* I must not forget to include another beautiful Thrush—the first perfect specimen brought to England being found by me near Tien-tsin, which has been described as a new variety by Mr. Swinhoe in the Ibis, and named by him *Orcetes gularis*.

The gaudy Golden Oriole (*Oriolus Sinensis*), with its brilliant orange or primrose-coloured body, fantastically barred in various ways with streaks of the deepest black, is also a candidate for favour; but it does not succeed to any great extent; for it is only when at large, in the coolest time of the day, and in the thickest woods, that its fine flutina-like *aria* seizes on the willing ear in pleasant snatches, now and again; differing but little from that of its European congener, which the Italian agriculturist fancies to be the bearer of the pleasing intelligence that the figs are ripe, by its chaunting something resembling the words — 'Contandino è maturo lo fico.'

It is indeed delightful to hear this bird's song when the eye is at the same time charmed by those exquisite and singular little denizens of the trees, the Paradise Fly-catchers (*Muscipeta Paradisi*)—delicate and lovely enough, assuredly, for that supernal region, as they twirl and flutter about on the branches, or dart off gaily in pursuit of insects. So handsome is the little steel-blue head, adorned with an ever-rising and falling crest, the grass-green mouth, the eyelids and bill tinted like the bloom on the grape, the snow-white body and surprisingly long tail, with each milky feather trimmed by such a delicate border of black, that my eyes were almost dazzled when I first saw these sylvan beauties fluttering about, interspersed at odd times with the chocolate-coloured variety (*Muscipeta Incei*).

Other favourites are numerous; but of these the Gorget Warbler, or *Hoong-hwa*, Red-throat (*Calliope Lathamii*), and the Blue-throated Warbler (*Phœnicura Suecica*), are the tamest, though their note is low and plaintive, like that of the Robin Redbreast. They stand any amount of handling, for I have seen their attendants wash them in weak tea, when their plumage was soiled or the birds were sickly, and wrap them up in a comfortable bandage without injury; but I always liked the little green *Pye-yur* —

'White Eye'—(*Zosterops japonica*), with its pearly spectacles and humble twitter. So do the Chinese; for it is such an affectionate and sociable little fairy, that in pairs it will live a long time quite happily, but alone it soon pines and dies.

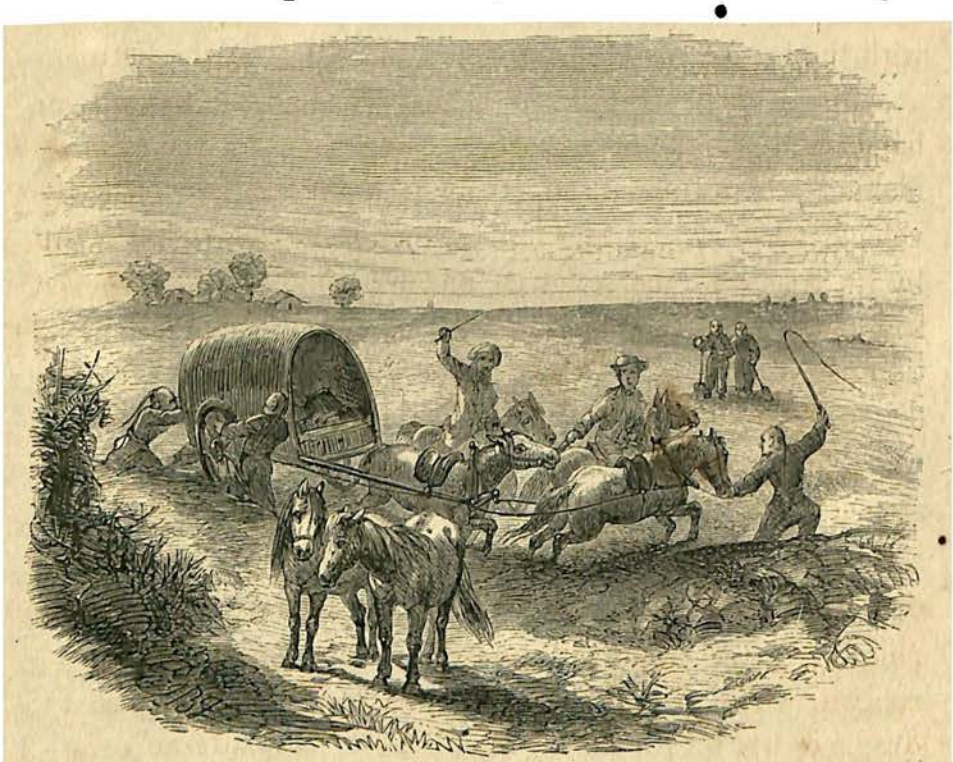
At the end of one of our dullest day's marches through a most desponding region, seven-eighths of which must have been mud and morass, we were not very exacting in our selection of a quarter for the night, and fixed on the roadside caravansary of Tu-kia-tai. The host and his numerous servants did all in their power to make us snug for the night. A herd of donkeys in a shed not far from our room seemed to be of a different mind, for during the long hours of darkness they kept up a truly heartrending concert of braying quite beyond the powers of human endurance. It was with no small delight that, about three o'clock, we hailed the earliest streaks of dawn, and began to pack up once more, little refreshed by the five or six hours' rest. We were desirous of reaching Newchwang by the evening, as we were only about fifty miles from it.

As usual in all such cases, the cart was not movable until nearly six. The carter muddles about as if he had not slept for a fortnight, and Ma-foo is horribly redolent of decayed samshu, while his brain must be quite addled by the large doses he has swallowed before going to sleep, as he always did, in his clothes—for he was barely conscious of what he was about when he poured some scalding tea into the carter's shoe, and sent him limping and howling into a corner, where he all but took leave of his senses.

No sooner had we emerged from the gate of the inn, and got on the pathway, than the stupid fellow, who would do nothing but sit on the shaft when the roads were bad, to save his nearly worn-out shoes, allowed the mules to take the muddiest part of the road. Before we could call or stop them, the cart was buried over the axletree in the most

adhesive compound imaginable, and the mules standing up to the necks and hocks, unable to stir. All the *tah*, *tahs*, and *chur*, *churs*, of the agitated Jehu were unavailing, except when the shaft beast, at the first sound of his voice, made a bound, sunk on its knees, and would have been suffocated had I not rushed to the rescue, at the imminent risk of losing my riding-boots — the only pair I had — and got its head raised above the mess.

The weather promised well, and the sun had not yet



Fast in the mud.

become too warm for us; but here were all our hopes of a good morning's work shattered by the blundering and inattention of this Chinese booby. We might as well have tried to carry one of our ponies on our backs as to have moved that cart an inch out of the slough; so, after making ourselves as disgustingly dirty as the brats who burrow for coin in the Thames filth, we despatched Ma-foo back to the village to obtain the assistance of the labourers, who were assembled

in groups around the farm-houses, not yet having begun their work in the fields.

Two or three came rather reluctantly, and were slow in aiding us. Shovels were had recourse to to clear a way for the long-projecting end of the axletree, and to make a somewhat firm track to more favourable ground. But this was no trifling matter; and the Chinese were loath to enter the mud after they had seen our driver make a spring towards the middle of it and sink to the thighs, where, with a most determined struggle, he had enough to do to release himself, with the loss of his blue soft-soled shoes, left at the bottom.

After a long struggle, in which we had all to put our hands and shoulders to work, we were just on the point of making a determined effort for the emancipation of the vehicle, when the leading mule, which had remained attached by its traces to the axletree, and was standing to one side, suddenly bolted across to the other, and before anyone had time to guard against the catastrophe, the unfortunate driver, who had been tugging and grappling at the shafts, was lying deeply in the mud with one of them on his stomach, and looking as helpless and terrified as if in the agonies of death. This accident, occasioned as it was by his own mule tripping up his heels by the traces, caused a most painful fit of laughter impossible for some minutes to repress, which drove the object of it, when at last he was dragged up, into a flaring rage, and to the utterance of all kinds of strange expressions.

After an hour's very hard work we got the cart removed out of present difficulties, and on to a sound scrap of ground. We offered our valuable assistants some money for the good service they had done us, and as a recompense for the soiling their clothes had undergone, but strange enough they would take no reward from us except thanks. When they were told that we were far-travelled strangers, and found us ready to laugh and joke with them, they seemed to change their

manner altogether, and from a cold unwillingness to come near us at first, they were ready to do any service we might have desired.

It was of no use pressing them to accept of the trifle—take it they would not, though silver must have been rather a rarity among them. So after warmly thanking them we got on the move again, through awful sloughs and deep ruts, apparently specially selected by the begrimed conductor in the perversity of his disposition, or from an irremediable stupidity natural to him, but characteristic of his countrymen in general, in preferring the sloughs and ruts of antiquity, whether leading to interminable disaster or irremovable obstacles. If only two roads presented themselves before him, either from blunted sagacity or a stupid tenacity of purpose, he was sure to take the wrong one. On he proceeded, sitting on the front part of the wagon, eternally chucking to his team, and wagging his thin legs, which are but scantily encased in dirty blue-cotton bags that serve the purpose of, but can never be designated as trousers; or drumming his thigh continually with the only hand left at liberty, he jogged along as he best could, leaving a good deal to the instinctive faculties of the quadrupeds in advance, who, long trained to pursue the beaten path, maintained the most rigid adherence to it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PASTORAL COUNTRY — 'KOONG-SHI' — FARM-HOUSES — PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT OF SEWAGE — IGNORANCE OF DAIRY PRODUCE — HUMBLE DORMITORY — A YOUNG MANDARIN — BANKS OF THE LIAU-HÔ — BOAT VOYAGE — ARRIVAL AT NEWCHWANG — AN UNFRIENDLY RECEPTION — INHOSPITABLE LANDLORD.

BENDING a little northwards, the country commenced raising itself from the marsh and mud, and the salt efflorescence on the sun-baked crust of earth began to be succeeded by grass as the road became firmer and our progress accelerated; while the light-green foliage of the graceful willow interposed itself between us and the sun at short intervals, and here and there formed diminutive avenues of shade, as refreshing to the sight as they were grateful to the feelings.

Farm-houses, from being isolated and scarce, began to congregate in gradually increasing numbers on the most favoured situations, and to exchange the millet-stalk and poverty-stricken earthen structures for those of brick and wood; and the fields put forth their improving aspects in the same manner, showing how eagerly the inhabitants seized on the slightest approach of amendment in the soil to bring it under the sway of cultivation. The ditches were cut with more skill; attempts had been made to raise the general level, and where this had not succeeded, the land was banked round with wide ridges to keep out the water; —in short, the desolate country was being rapidly redeemed by the efforts of scrupulous industry.

The gardens displayed a little more vitality, and some of them a fair amount of taste in the matter of flowers and

vegetable beds, and every one had its two or three vines neatly trellised over the little square bower that served for their support, as well as a cool shady recess for the inmates of the houses.

It was necessary to pass through several villages. The accustomed amount of reckless curiosity was duly excited by an individual who, discarding all self-gratification, seemed determined that every human being within the reach of his limbs or voice should participate in the unwonted sight, as he gave warning of our approach. Their greeting and civility was of the passive kind,—limited to absurd remarks on our costumes, beards, eyes, and saddlery, and the absence of *tails* on us; and with vacant stares that plainly told how little their minds were really engaged in trying to understand anything about us: they looked, as they thronged together, like so many young children, whose eyes and mouths mechanically follow whatever is presented to them for the first time, but whose intellects are not yet able to appreciate the nature or functions of these objects.

The only active demonstration of welcome that we received was bestowed on us by a somewhat intelligent-looking old man, who stood before his little gate with pipe and tobacco-pouch in hand, and the end of his fan peeping over the right shoulder. As soon as we came near, this venerable gentleman brought his closed hands in contact before him, and made a profound vertical sweep of the air with them; following the salûte with a kindly '*Koong-shi! Koong-shi!*' —Hail, hail! To which we replied by saying, '*Ne how, ne how-a*'—equivalent to hoping he was well.

After many devious turns and wanderings over unknown and almost trackless ground, and crossing another river apparently of a good depth, and subject to the rise and fall of the tide, we emerged for awhile from the grain-bearing country. We now found ourselves traversing the richest

meadow-land we, in the gladness of our hearts, thought could possibly exist anywhere. It was quite different from any other portion of the country we had travelled through. Large tracts of land were enclosed, divided, and subdivided by high earthen banks, on which were planted young willow trees; and a deep ditch on each side of these drained off the superfluous moisture. A second crop of fine grass was in process of being mown, and the strong perfume of the sweet-scented vernal grass mixed with it, and the wild lavender, sometimes gave these rich meadows quite an English atmosphere. The farm-houses bore a great resemblance, in many respects, to those of middle and third-class agriculturists in Britain. Dispensing with the intricacies and mysterious disposition of passages and apartments found towards Tien-tsin, they consisted only of a quadrangular courtyard. On the upper side was the dwelling-house, with large open windows on each side of the doorway, through which we could see the female portion of the family at work, spinning cotton or renovating the household apparel.

Mules and ponies were busy in the courtyard threshing the wheat grown on fields separated from the grass land. This was a very simple operation, and consisted merely in dragging a heavy stone roller over the heads—for the stalks had all been cut off to within a few inches of the heads—or treading out the grain by the feet of oxen and mules on a prepared space of ground, where lime appeared to be combined with the earth or clay to form a compact level surface. This method appeared as wasteful and slow as it was primitive; and the winnowing was little better, for the short stems of the straw having been removed, the wheat was gathered on to another plastered space, and men were busy with shovels throwing it up against the feeble wind that moved across the country at that hot time.

Little groups, presided over by a mother or grandmother, attended to the grinding of the millet or wheat for the

dinner, and carefully brushed it under the stone roller that was made to revolve on a pivot at one end by the younger branches of the family.

The crops were all stacked, and the stacks and haycocks stood around after the fashion of our own, but they were better made, I think, for more pains appeared to have been taken to preserve them. Their conical tops had a roofing of sun-baked mud to render them completely waterproof; while, to prevent their being blown down by the severe gales that visit this exposed part of the country, thick ropes were passed through and over the stacks, to which heavy stones were hung. Great square harrows with long iron teeth, and curious sowing machines, seemingly but little used, lay in corners, and the rude carts for farming purposes, and the round-topped hearse-like vehicle for family excursions, were ensconced in outhouses near where the spare beasts of draught were tied, heads up, to posts before wooden or stone troughs.

Some wagons had the sides and ends enclosed by closely-woven screens of millet-stalk, and were employed in carting the powdery manure from the places set apart for its preparation to the fields. We had every reason for seeking to avoid these, or at least to get to windward of them; for if the strong *bouquet* of the precious load did not repel us, the cloud of fetid dust that covered all who might be anywhere near, was quite unbearable.

To increase the fertility of the soil, the Northern Chinese have only recourse, so far as we could observe, to animal manure, which is gathered and scrupulously hoarded up until winter sets in, and then prepared by admixture with the ooze of ditches, the dust of streets, or the earth of plains. After drying for a short period, it is pulverised into a fine powder, which is easily spread over the fields by sieves, or even by the hand. This is a less offensive mode than that in vogue in the South, where the *sordida rura* is collected

for months in huge earthenware pots, clustered around every village, and which prove heart-sickening objects to every European. Every such traveller gladly notes that the North is, if not so economical in these details, at any rate less offensive in its small open-air depôts. Nothing can be more disagreeable to him than running against those human fertilisers of the Flowery Land, who wander about, baskets over backs, handling three-pronged forks, with which they gather up the perfumed materials so essential to fructification.

Male and female labourers were busy in the fields mowing or cutting the grass with short-bladed, almost straight sickles, set at an acute angle in wooden handles; but we could not see a scythe anywhere. At one place we saw some women reaping wheat, with a small blade of metal strapped in front of the fingers, and a pad of tough stuff laid in the palm of the same hand, against which the blade was pressed to cut the few stalks grasped each time.

The grassy perfume was so exhilarating, the morning was so beautiful, though very warm, the country was so delightful, and the water in the deep wells so cool and delicious after that we had been drinking in the salt marsh (especially when we drank it under the shelter of those glorious old trees), that we were in raptures with our morning's ride, and many times thought of similar scenes at home; but somehow or another those yellow faces and long tails would spring up and destroy the kindly illusion. Had it not been so reekingly hot, these green meads would have been our halting-place for some time, for we were really enchanted by such a homely and congenial locality — the favourite resort of the skylark, whose numbers and endless warblings filled the ear, while in the clumps of willows various songsters were busy swelling the grand melodies of nature. Such retreats were very tempting when we were broiled and blistered by the sun; but we had a long distance before us, midday was nigh, and

inns were so scarce that we scarcely knew when we might have an opportunity of breakfasting.

We reached a sort of half lodging, half farm-house, at an angle of one of the numerous fenced-in fields through which we were confusedly trying to track the way, and we endeavoured to make a halt of it; but the building, besides being shockingly dirty, even for a Chinese house, was well crowded by a lot of unclean wretches, who squatted on the benches near the windows and looked at us in a rather repulsive fashion. It had also the great disadvantage of providing nothing better for our wearied beasts than hay; so we made up our minds to go fifteen li ahead to a village where our disturbed landlord told us there was a *tien*. Close by the house we saw several fine but small cows, with calves following them, and our desire to obtain a copious draught of milk became so powerful that we were compelled to ask for it of this man, who we guessed was their owner.

At first he did not understand us, then he wondered, then laughed, but observing that we were serious he assented, and said we might try any one of the herd. He at once fetched what may have been the most docile; but neither he nor any of his neighbours had ever heard of or seen such a strange feat as milking a cow, and would not be taught how to do it. We therefore dismounted, and, having procured a basin, set to work in as business-like a manner as could be expected from amateurs in dairy matters; but the brute, though docile and quiet enough to handle elsewhere, seemed mad when touched near the udder. She bellowed, kicked, and jumped in a most outrageous manner. We then blindfolded her and held up one of her forelegs, but after an ineffectual struggle the proprietor objected to our using any more restraint, and intimated that we could not have any *ngow-yur*, as he termed milk.

We had no alternative but, parched and hungry as we were, to course through the fragrant meadow-land, skirting

by tree-hid villages and willow hedge-row, until we came to a larger aggregation of dwellings than usual, and of a decidedly English type, with a good wide road flanked by a high fence on each side. We soon discovered what was once an inn, but the sign-post, with gasping fish and hoops, had been removed from the roadside; and though the courtyard contained one passenger cart, the long building in front was occupied by a large array of strong-smelling half-naked men, who tumbled about or slept on the kangs ranged on two sides of the house, and who, by the implements lying near them, were tillers of the soil resting during the heat of the day. From these and the stacks of grain piled in the yard, we concluded that this was a farmer's dwelling; and a very civil man who came out to meet us, and whom we supposed to be the landlord, confirmed our opinion, for he said he was not in the habit of entertaining travellers, and feared we could not be accommodated, as his house was full of workmen. We saw no earthly reason why we should thrust ourselves in the midst of such a crowd, and told him that we would rather go in another portion of his establishment which we indicated. It was his store and labourer's sleeping-room, but he offered no objections to our breakfasting in it. Our famished ponies were stabled and fed with all alacrity, and we were soon busily engaged in clearing out a space in the large room for our reception.

Amidst a most promiscuous collection of oddities — huge mat-baskets, filled with millet and Indian corn, stuck in the narrow strip of room left between brick winter-beds, on which were spread the only mats and clothes belonging to the nightly occupants — narrow forms, boxes, sieves, rolls of cane-matting, articles of saddlery, jars of bean oil, a few warlike weapons, wheelbarrows, &c. — we broke our fast. The place was crowded with great swarthy men, who annoyed us very much by their spitting and smoking, until we were, in self-defence, obliged to turn them away.

There was much, even in this humble dormitory, to remind one of similar lodging-houses attached to farms at home. At the head of every mat whereon some tired individual stretched his limbs at night, hung the little bundle of well-mended duds*—the entire wardrobe of some unaspiring slave—the neatly hung-up boots, so often cobbled; the little trinkets of other days, carefully hid away in minute niches scooped out in the wall; the cracked bamboo flute, the screeching old fiddle, or the three-stringed guitar, to while away the dull evenings spent near the rays of the soft tallow-candle, whose traces we can plainly discern on little wooden blocks near the bed's head; and there was a gigantic bamboo skip-jack, the same in form almost, and identical in principle, with those we were wont at school to manufacture out of the breast-bone of a goose; with all kinds of rude and childish contrivances for the elicitation of amusement after the day's work was over.

The passengers' cart was got ready before ours, and a tall young fellow with a very pale face, a light gauze dress, and a conical straw hat surmounted by a white button, got inside and was driven away. We soon followed, and passing for a mile or two through a green lane, luxuriously roofed in by willows, we left the enclosed country behind as we came upon a great open plain covered with high-standing and almost ripe crops, breached in places by wide gaps of meadow-land, in which the people were working in black patches like so many ants. Threshing and other agricultural operations were busily going on in the hamlets we passed, and everybody looked busy, making the most of the lovely weather.

Our servants had been again imbibing the cursed samshu; the carter was hopelessly imbecile, and Ma-foo had enough to do to keep on his pony's back. The paths became more numerous, and crossed each other; the carter had forgotten all about the directions he picked up at the farm-house,

and wheeled abruptly into a road that we were certain could not be the proper one. In this fix we rode back to the young mandarin, whom we had passed notwithstanding his start, and he very obligingly told us our way.

Soon, high mountains began to be shadowed out dimly far away to the southward, in which direction we were tending; and we knew that these must be a part of the long range beyond Newchwang. By-and-by we see white sails moving swiftly among the trees and along the ground, like spectres, to the right and to the left, near us and a long way off. This part of the route was remarkably pretty, and so un-Chinese-like that we seemed to have got into a new country at last.

In a short time, and quite suddenly, we gain the right bank of that important river, the Liau hô, and find it as busy with all kinds of large and small craft as the Peiho in the spring season. The smaller junks of a light draught are scudding swiftly northward, wind and tide in their favour; and those bound for the gulf are securely moored inshore, waiting for the change in the current. The river is here of a considerable width, and divides into two branches — one running to the north-west, the *San-fun* river; and the other, the principal, bending acutely to the southward, and, farther on, to the north-east. As far as we could see, north and south, its course is extremely tortuous; and it twists and bends about in such a snake-like fashion over the land, that white square sails can be seen in every direction ploughing on in the middle of harvest fields, through dwarfish plantations, round villages, up bright-green meadows, and down again through reedy swamps, until one's head is completely turned watching the progress of boats seen but a few minutes before bowling smartly up at the rate of ten miles an hour, and now circling round and backwards and up and down, as if condemned never to leave the spot.

The water is very tawny and very muddy. The banks are undergoing a continual sweeping away and building up,

and suffering incessantly a greater amount of distortion and deformity, from the impinging and the earthy burden of the swift-running waters. Where the banks were being rapidly undermined by the former, the trunks and branches of trees were staked, or allowed to float a short distance above; and these broke the force of the stream, as well as caused a deposition of the earthy matter suspended in the water. But there appeared to be no remedy for the shelving deposits always being made where the banks projected into the river. The whole country on both sides looked rich and thriving as a grain-growing locality, and the scene was not without a good deal of beauty.

Newchwang was not a port, nor were there any Europeans residing there; but at a port situated near the mouth of the river, named Ying-tzse, our merchants had taken up their quarters, so to this place we must go.

We made every effort to procure a boat to carry us down —we embarking here, and sending the ponies and cart on by road — but without avail. We must needs rest at Newchwang for the night, and start for the new foreign settlement in the morning; and as that town is situated some two or three miles beyond the opposite bank of the Liau hô, we hired a large swing-shaped ferry-boat, impelled by huge wooden oars, curved and widened like a scimetar, and managed by two groaning fellows, that plied backwards and forwards for the transportation of travellers and carriages, under the guidance of a tall gaunt knock-kneed Chinaman (the knock-knees a novelty)—strikingly bearing the outward semblance of a Yankee skipper—in an enormous-brimmed straw hat, lashed to his pockpitted face and jaws by a network of hempen cord, who steered the slow-moving barge by a very unwieldy oar-rudder.

After a deal of delay in bringing this cumbersome vessel alongside the shallow bank, and after nearly knocking up the two oarsmen, who jumped overboard and tugged it with

might and main against the tide to where we were waiting, we, with our white-buttoned friend, get on board, and without any accident embark ponies, mules, and cart. The young mandarin is loquacious enough, and readily enters into conversation—though there is a certain reserve about him that considerably detracts from his friendly bearing, and would lead one to think he was suspicious of our character and unobtrusive mission. After all the time we were together—having to be pulled a long way down against the tide, and then allowed to drift up to the landing-place—we could elicit nothing from him that was worth remembering. He was not to be put off his guard during this long half-hour; and when we had gained the land again, and were beginning our progress towards Newchwang, we parted as if we never had met.

A little booth stood on the tracking-path, in which eatables of various kinds were displayed for the inspection of the sailors who ventured ashore. Here we were delighted to regale ourselves with several basins of warm muddy water, for which the stall-keeper charged us a rather large number of cash, considering he had but a few yards to carry it from the river.

For about two miles we kept following the contorted course of the Hô, the banks of which were in many places very lofty, and watching the little fleets of junks making their way towards Moukden; some with a favourable puff of wind gliding smoothly in mid-channel, others at the bends and reaches tacking, and some, tired of wooing the inconstant Zephyrus and circling in the giddy maze of the crooked waterway, were being hauled along by long strings of men.

When the Liau at length began to incline to the north, we left it, and proceeded easterly for some five miles in as fine a piece of country as any one need desire to see so far northwards, and where closely-gathered farm-houses with

well-thatched roofs, and ample yards stocked with grain and forage in abundance, testified to the thriving character of the locality, and the well-dressed, hale-and-hearty looks of the people we met on the road, spoke eloquently in favour of the climate and the comforts spread around. Trees grew everywhere, and their light foliage and tall trunks, flinging shade and variety over the scene, afforded all that was necessary to relieve the very flat country, and redeem from monotony the almost wearying repetition of corn and millet crop, standing with such rigid regularity on all sides.

At intervals the booming sound of firearms in the distance startled otherwise unmolested herons, cranes, and wild ducks, from their feeding-places by the side of green-banked pools of stagnant water.

It was after sunset when the large straggling town of Newchwang was entered; and as we passed by what may have been the remains of a mud and brick enclosing wall, as well as some large respectable-looking houses, with numbers of shops, profusely ornamented with painting and gilding—particularly the pawnbroking establishments—we felt glad; for here, we thought, we should meet with a good reception, as our merchants must be well known, and be in constant intercourse with the inhabitants of a town such as this, for it is not twenty miles from our new treaty port. This feeling was the more powerful from the fact that we had been thirteen hours in the saddle, though we had only travelled forty-five miles, and had met with but very *ordinary* accommodation for the last two or three days.

So, as soon as we had gained the precincts of the town, Ma-foo was sent on before to secure quarters in the best inn, and prepare to get us a good dinner while we at our leisure threaded the principal streets, intending to have a gratifying inspection of what we were led to infer was a highly important town for trade—the Liverpool or London of Mantchuria.

We had scarcely, however, got through one or two pavementless thoroughfares, before we were beset by as noisy, tumultuous, and ill-conditioned a rabble as I had yet been entangled in during my stay in the land, and which received a rapid accession of numbers from every alley and dwelling on the way. From a few dirty strapping-looking fellows, who at first turned out and jeered at us when they were at a safe distance, the crowd became a mob, and the comparatively mild taunts were quickly exchanged for very opprobrious epithets and indecent expressions, as these unfriendly wretches clung closer and closer to our ponies' heels. Amid tumultuous howls and shouts, there was no difficulty in distinguishing words which by their import made us once more unstrap our holsters, and look anxiously from time to time at the handle of our friend-in-need. One, especially, sounded in such a lively spirit-stirring strain, that it recalled the emotions with which we first read of the deeds enacted during the Reign of Terror, with its yells, *à la lanterne! à la machine!* This was the word *Sha* or *Shat*, which being interpreted means 'cut their heads off;' and it decidedly looked as if such was the aim and determination of the base *cretati* who were so liberal with their threats, for they became bolder and bolder as we flogged and spurred through them. We had no option at last but to leave the streets and seek refuge in the courtyard of a large hostelry that stood near, until the arrival of Ma-foo.

The place was filthy and desolate. The yard, containing troughs and mangers, was a perfect Augean stable; and as we dismounted and entered the yawning hovel called the inn, a stench met our noses sufficient, at any other crisis, to have driven us back to the outer air again. The mingled odours of that pungent sickly millet-spirit—*samshu*, rancid bean-oil, garlic, filth and fustiness, assailed our collapsed stomachs in a most uncomfortable, hunger-annihilating way —yet face them and breathe them we must. The courtyard

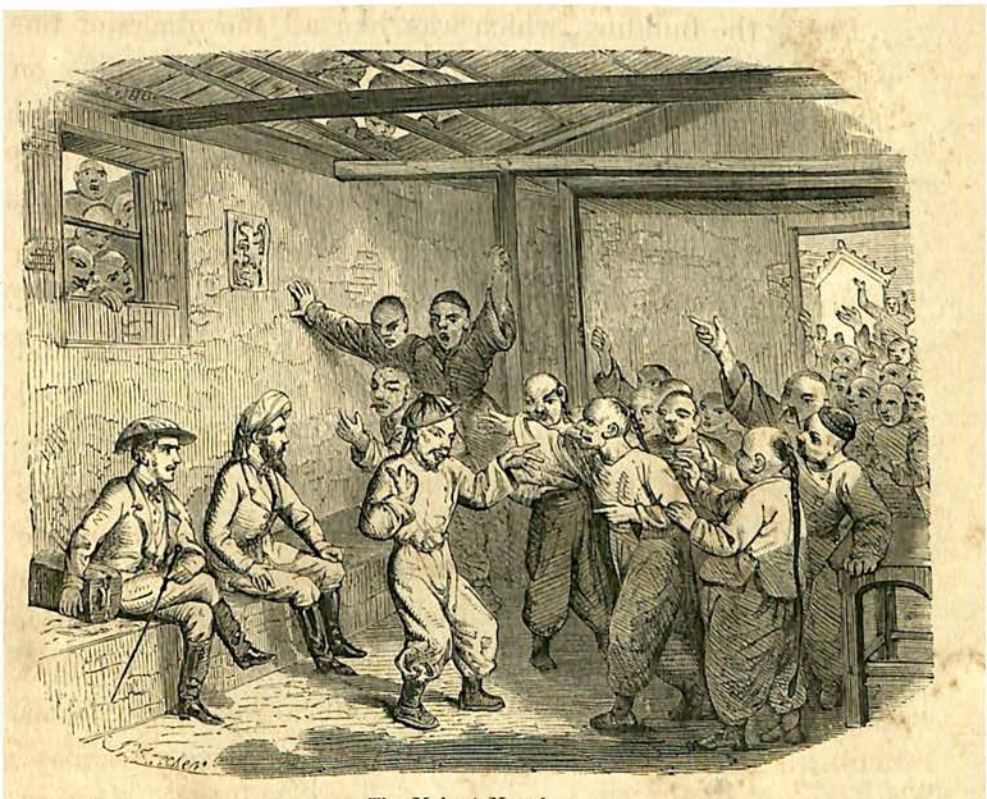
was crammed with the riotous *fæx populi*, mounted on mangers, troughs, boxes, and carts, to carry out their mischievous projects, and who, when we turned upon them to order them away, boldly faced us, and did not move a jot. This was the worst symptom we had yet observed, as at all the other places where we chanced to be annoyed, whenever we made a demonstration, or showed a resolute front, the people gave way at once, and fled.

Inside the building, which was like all the others of this class in having two immense stove bed-places running on each side for nearly the whole length of the building, and some small rooms at one end in which we saw a plentiful supply of bows and arrows, we were not more fortunate, for the door was at once the scene of a most uproarious crush and struggle for admission. The paper panes of the windows, and even the window-frames, were quickly smashed in, and the more active of the scamps even mounted on the roof and began pulling up the thatch in a most ruffianly fashion. The landlord stood at first behind a kind of counter, saying nothing during all this row, but eyeing his unfortunate customers with a very malignant countenance that far from favoured our anticipations of assistance from him. Though he had no lodgers and his house was empty, as he acknowledged when we inquired, still he vowed he would not let us remain under his fast-disappearing roof for love or money. When we showed him our passports he shook his hand before his face and averted his eyes, as much as to declare that he cared nothing for them.

All persuasions having signally failed, we tried a bolder course, and, sitting down on one of the beds, told our inhospitable host that we would remain there until the morning, as it was his duty and business to afford accommodation and food to travellers. This only made things worse, for he stepped back among the crowd and left the vagabonds composing it to do as they liked. They—strong

as officious, but not valiant — else we might have been overpowered—soon brought their unclean bodies into very close approximation to ours. There might quickly have been a collision, had not our christianised Ma-foo edged his thin carcase through the unruly mass, and stood there before us 'drunk as fifty pipers.'

Embarrassing and trying as was our plight at this moment, and dangerous as was our position,—because we were at the



The Mob at Newchwang.

mercy of a rude and hostile gang, the most nervous individual who ever found himself in the presence of a multitude of willing headsmen, could not have resisted the intensely comical appearance of the intoxicated little man. All but speechless; his face so distorted and queer that we thought he had been attacked by partial paralysis, which had drawn one corner of his mouth up almost to an eye that remained spasmodically closed, while the other one twinkled like a

flickering taper; his legs kicked about with a St. Vitus' uncertainty, and his right arm bent at an acute angle (the fingers pointing upwards) might have been fixed in that position. Seldom — very seldom indeed — has it been our lot to behold a drunken Chinese, but this one exhibited so ludicrous and melancholy a figure that, after our first burst of merriment, I think we had no desire to see another inebriated celestial.

Poor Ma-foo's crossings and devoutness, and reported long apprenticeship to the congenial forms and absolutions of a religion that did not cost him much in the way of conscience, could scarcely tend to give us a very vivid impression of the character of a Chinese convert, or of the trust that one might place in him merely because he was a Roman Catholic. At the time of all others, when his services as an interpreter and intermediator were most required, and we relied most upon them, this was his condition.

With the greatest amount of patience, and an infinite number of hiccups and breakdowns, he contrived to make us understand that no house in the town would receive us for any amount of money. Their friendship or their love we certainly never depended upon for aid, but we always flattered ourselves that money would have proved a more potent pick-lock to their mercenary hearts. Not so, however; and here we were on the verge of a scuffle, everybody against us, and in momentary expectation of some outrageous provocation that would entail a serious retaliation and damaging ulterior consequences to a good number of those concerned.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and the twilight was vanishing, while the interior of the inn looked more foreboding; so, leaving the tipsy groom and carter to fight their own way out, we got on our ponies with some little trouble, and were soon in the street, where, as good luck would have it, a boy was found who was bribed with a florin to put us on the

road to Ying-tsze, some thirty miles off; and with all kinds of bitter defiances and some few stones hurled after us, at that late hour, tired, hungry, baked, and thirsty, we, with no reluctance, left a place where a few minutes' longer stay might have seen bloodshed, and began a dark and dreary journey towards the sea.

CHAPTER XXV.

A WELCOME HALT — APPROACH TO THE NEW BRITISH SETTLEMENT AT YING-TSZE — MR. MEADOWS, THE ENGLISH CONSUL — ENJOYMENT OF ENGLISH COMFORTS — SHOCK OF AN EARTHQUAKE — SENTIMENTS OF A COMPRADOR RESPECTING THE UNPROFITABLENESS OF BRITISH TRAVELLERS — TRADE AT THE NEW PORT—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS PORTION OF CHINA — NATIVE SHIPS — NEW PASSPORTS.

THE road was shockingly bad, and our leg and spirit-worn ponies floundered about in the holes in a very jeopardising style, until some time near one o'clock in the morning we came to a roadside halting-house, and knocking up the inmates got them to give the animals some hay, while we lay down in our travelling costume on a dry bit of ground outside to rest until daylight broke, when we might finish so much of our enterprise and be again among countrymen.

We were so thoroughly beaten by fatigue, that I much doubt if even the threats and fierce hullaballoos of the Newchwang rabble would have readily roused us. We obtained at least three hours' sleep before we were disturbed by the villagers getting ready to go to their fields, the clattering of ponies' hoofs, and the teeth-tingling screed of the plough-cradle along the dusty way.

'Merry larks are ploughmen's clocks' applies as truly to the Chinese tiller of the soil as to the more scientific furrow-maker under the Western heavens; for the lark and the ploughman must have left their beds nearly together that morning, and were both hastening to their chosen scene of industry—the one in cloud-land, the other in the parched-up glebe or fallow field.

We hurled ourselves rapidly along a tolerably good and wide highway, with, on each side, a well-cultivated country, but as the sun got higher and higher the heat became very intense and stupefying, and in our famished state we felt it more than we had done for some days. Not a puff of air passed over the land, but the heated atmosphere flickered in tremulous undulations near the ground, and the crows, dropping languidly on the most open places they could find, turned their breasts seaward, and, expanding their wings, waited to catch the slightest intimation of the gulf breeze.

About eight o'clock we entered a small grocer's shop, and without very much ceremony walked into a back apartment, told the terrified owner that we were hungry, and wanted something to eat; and sitting down on a bench, tarried until he had made us some tea and furnished us with about a dozen cakes, very palatable indeed to such ravenous mortals. We were not a long time in soothing the fears of the small dealer, who did not forget to charge us comfortably for the passover.

Gulfwards, the country became more and more sterile—though the beautiful range of distant hills parallel to our course redeemed it a good deal—and unpromising enough; yet we passed on at a lively pace where we could, for the road was broken up into a number of narrow paths with earthen banks and ditches, in passing over one of which our shaft mule got fast, and was nearly strangled by the collar. After catching a glimpse of some junk-sails on the right, which told us of our proximity to the Liau hô, and to our front a patch of bristling junk-masts projected from the face of the country like the quills of irascible porcupine—with the tall tapering masts and heavy spars of an English gunboat and some European trading vessels, we are satisfied that our new port is before us. We therefore leave the slow toiling cart to its fate, and hurry on to ascertain what refuge may be there in store for us.

We are soon on an open plain nearly denuded of crops—the black muddy ground evenly powdered with a hoary layer of salt and lying very low, especially where it is covered with pools of water. Slush and mud everywhere,—a congenial home for myriads of crustaceans, who dart about and rush for safety to countless perforations where they may hide themselves. The river is neared; and its extravagant windings, bends, and doubles, are really perplexing. Almost as wide as the Thames near Gravesend, and like it in many respects, it flows through a wretched tract of land lower in level than the Essex marshes, the inhabited side almost a waste of shallow pools and black saline earth, parched and submerged by turns during the summer, and frozen into a stony solidity during the rigours of winter.

The opposite shore is covered only by long dense thickets of reeds, which grow in wild luxuriance in the dangerous mud, and so great a circle does the Liau here make round a large extent of the land, that if the traveller did not know beforehand he would certainly pronounce it to be an island, for there are the steadily moving sails of junks completely surrounding it, and looking as if ever condemned to revolve —satellite-like—round this unattractive centre. The Thames as seen from Shooter's Hill, or the Forth from Stirling Castle, could not present anything nearly so flexuous as this.

The first huts we came to were of mud, and of the poorest description; while their occupants were squalid in the extreme. In the foul black slush of a wide ditch, which had been but recently deserted by the tide, a squabbling crowd of naked children of both sexes are immersed, who are as actively engaged in the capture of some unfortunate decapodous animals left behind, as if their existence depended on them. This ditch margins a plot of aguish-looking semi-aqueous ground on the river's bank, only partially reclaimed from the tide; with six platforms, and as many gaping embrasures commanding the approach from the sea. We learned

with something akin to horror and pity, that this unpleasant spot has been fixed upon as the site for the new British settlement, and it is here that a very unpromising Shanghai is to be founded on as barren and deadly a soil as could be picked out in any other quarter of the globe. It is impossible to look at it without commiserating those who have to build and reside upon that foundation, even though the buildings be raised, drained, paved, and patched after a design as perfect as only British enterprise can afford or execute.

Yet, as we draw nearer the town, we are impressed with the idea that this is the most favourable and judicious selection that could have been made in a place where the general level seems to be below that of the water; for besides its being at that proper and not inconvenient distance above Ying-tsze, which will admit of its extension—should that ever happen—seawards, and its more complete isolation from the disagreeables that invest and sicken Chinese towns, it stands on a wide reach of the river where there is space and depth enough to contain a fleet of such European vessels as are employed in the coasting trade.

A few yards farther, and at the gate of a rather comfortable new temple, we see some white faces—a gladdening sight after our long ride of twelve days—and are told that this is the temporary abode of Mr. Meadows, the English Consul. We enter the courtyard and are introduced to the notice of that gentleman, who rather astonished us by saying that he knew of our being at Newchwang the previous evening—word to that effect having been transmitted to him by the authorities there, though we had never seen or heard of a single mandarin in that town, else we would have strongly appealed against the treatment to which we had been subjected.

The Consul seemed surprised when we told him our adventure, and, with a business determination, wrote off at

once a strong remonstrance to the presiding functionary of that town for his neglect of common courtesy to strangers, and his infraction of the articles of the treaty of 1860. If a large display of revolvers, rifles, and guns, ready to hand, around Mr. Meadows's room and bed-head, could be taken as any criterion of his faith in the peaceful character of the Chinese in this region, it was decidedly less than our own; and this was not increased when he told us how, a day or two before, his assistant was just rescued from assassination by some of the townsfolk for attempting to save a woman from ill-treatment.

One of his messengers conducted us into the town in which we had so much to expect; though on the way to our friend's quarters we saw little, save a long narrow street, paved with stone flags after the manner of Southern seaport towns; shops lining each side of this street of a very inferior style; great stacks of circular matting, containing beans and various kinds of pulse, in many courtyards; bean-crushing mills hard at work expressing the rank oil that so annoyed our sense of smell in every house, and which seems to be quite an important article of trade here; stalls lining this street, principally occupied by quack doctors, who mustered largely in stag's horns, bear's paws, fœtal animals, snake skins and live snakes, or, when dead, preserved in tar.

This was all that could be seen of our treaty-port; and the first and subsequent impressions were decidedly against it as a part of the world to make a livelihood or a fortune in, such as our Hong Kong and Shanghai merchants would seek. There is nothing about the trade or the situation of the place to commend it to speculators, and we shall be glad to learn if it ever pays a modest interest on any moneys that may be invested in its commerce.

Ere long we were at home in the society of countrymen, and received a welcome and hospitality such as amply made amends for the rough existence we had led since leaving

Tien-tsin; and joyful it was to share in the good things which civilisation contrives to send to this very distant nook. A bath was an inexpressible luxury after the dusty days and fusty nights in the various inns; and who can express the grateful feelings that seized us when swallowing deeply of Bass's Pale Ale, the only true nectar, wherever it is found?

Just at the moment we sat down to dinner, a strange sensation was experienced, that for the time nearly deprived me of breath, and completely took away all my self-possession. A tremulous vibration rattled for about a minute through the room, shaking us and everything in it as if we had been in a railway carriage when, at a moderate speed, it was being shunted suddenly from one line of rails to another. So confusing was the shock, and so unsophisticated were we in these sensations, that neither of us could tell in what direction it came or went. It was over so quickly that the opportunity of ascertaining anything exact about it was lost. From the undisturbed manner in which the Chinese took it, these subterranean perturbations cannot be of very rare occurrence on this side of the gulf; and in all probability the Japanese Sacred Mountain—the volcano Fusi-yama—has something to do with them and their production.

Our arrival overland from the Peking side of the gulf created quite a furore, not only among those of the natives who saw us enter the town, but particularly among that strange class of beings who have made a transition step towards Western civilisation and Western ideas — the genus Southern comprador — the real bargain-driver and business-transactor in the European hongs. Some of these men are a study in themselves; and I have never met with one who did not either instruct or amuse me. The object of our undergoing so much risk and fatigue was astutely canvassed; for the Chinese have no idea of what can possess a man beyond trade, or the prospect of making dollars, when they see him riding through their country jaded and dusty, stopping

frequently to dismount and anxiously examine every herb, flower, leaf, and stone he finds about, and carefully gathering and putting them away; or ascending almost inaccessible heights, to chip off a fragment of rock, which is diligently scanned, and then transferred to a secure receptacle. Travel with them is synonymous with trade, and trade is the realisation and accumulating of money, which is the only real passport to aggrandisement in this land after all. Utilitarian in the most rigorous acceptation of the term, they are unable to understand why men should expose themselves to the weather, and undergo all kinds of unnecessary exertion and fatigue, with the risks and chances of a wandering life, for the mere satisfying of an extravagant curiosity, which their old-fashioned materialism no doubt attributes to some erratic tendency in the minds of the wanderers, something akin to harmless insanity or highly-developed eccentricity.

The Chinaman rarely, if ever, leaves his home and the 'shrine of his household gods' to explore other countries, or even to journey into an adjoining province, unless his cupidity has been strongly roused by the prospect of acquiring wealth. When that has been attained in abundance sufficient for the maintenance of himself and family, he settles down quietly to spend the remainder of his life near the tombs of his fathers. Such is essentially the nature or the custom of the land population; and doubtless it exists to as great an extent among those who pass their years on the water, in trading along the coast, and up the rivers from one town to another.

This being the case, it was not to be wondered at that M.'s old and shrewd friends in tails and long skirts, should marvel at an English merchant neglecting business and riding for days and days together through a country where he could not traffic, and could scarcely even speak the language. No one could blame his old familiar comprador when he took his *protégé* aside, and gravely lectured him on his apparently objectless trip all the way from Shanghai to this lonely place,

and the light in which his fellows viewed those rambles, in something like the following oration: —

'What for you so muchee walkee walkee? You Shanghai have got largee housey. More better you stop Shanghai. No 'casion you so trub (trouble) walkee walkee every country. Chinaman no custom walkee walkee.'

Ying-tsze, at the time of our visit, was not a very enviable place to pitch one's tent in. The half-dozen merchants, or their starless representatives, who sweltered and swore out the summer in close airless dens called dwelling-houses, hired at a remorseless rent from fleecing owners, had nothing in life to enliven them beyond the expanse of landscape running out seawards: where a few conical tumuli, a narrow edging of melancholy sedges, a boundless vista of yellow water, and a few dreary ships of too great burden to cross the bar at the mouth of the river, stood high above the low shore, and gave a dismal picture of this penal settlement. There was scarcely any trade, and the little that was transacted at uncertain periods scarcely deserved the name. There was nothing to export, for the only native production — pulse — was not allowed by treaty to be carried in English ships; and the limited importation of cottons and opium, when disposed of, could hardly pay the expenses of storage, in consequence of the predominance of that ignoble institution here, as at every other trading port in the land, the—'squeeze.'

'No can do that pigeon (business); that man he wanchee (wants) make too muchee squeezy,' was the almost constantly iterated complaint of some comprador trying hard to dispose of his employer's goods to some intermediate dealer, who nefariously wished to line his own pocket at somebody's expense.

But there was much to worry and alarm these pilgrims of commerce in the great want of fresh water, which had to be carried in boats from a long way up the river; so that they were entirely at the mercy of those uncivil villagers towards

Newchwang, who might at any moment forbid the passage of the water-carriers; in their banishment for an indefinite time from all civilisation and society, and the non-receipt of papers or letters for months together; and among the last, but not the least of the worries, in the killing swarms of flies ever buzzing and crowding within doors.

Then there was the prospective danger of massacre ever before them, for the roystering sailors who infested the banks of the river were not slow to express their displeasure at the presence of the British traders and those sea-worthy ships which damaged their freightage and diminished their numbers; and there were cliques of ruffians existing in the town going by the names of sword and lance-racks, consisting of fellows who would not hesitate to stand as bullies for any Chinaman who felt himself aggrieved, and had money enough to pay for the murder of those who had offended him, if so be they were weak enough as to be easily overcome in an unwary manner.

The hard-visaged people one met in the streets were not so civil or so mindful of the presence of strangers as those we had been accustomed to see on the opposite side of the gulf; for whereas, at Peking or Tien-tsin, a Chinese who met you in a narrow way would do his utmost to make room for you passing him, here he would make a point of putting you to as much inconvenience as he could, without showing the slightest deference for your presence. Brush against him, or unknowingly give him a push, and ten to one he would return it, while his eyes and angry countenance gleamed upon you and said as plainly as need be: —

> 'You must not think
> That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
> That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
> And think it pastime.'

So that in reality there was but little safety in venturing out alone for a ramble, and nobody could tell when some one of

their little number might not be sacrificed; for human life could have but small value in a place where you might see a countryman carrying a covered basket, and if you removed the cloth to see what it contained, half a dozen heads with hacked necks and smeared with blood would meet your gaze, as the bearer told you that they were lately the property of robbers, and he was bringing them in to claim some reward. If you were so bold as to roam through the long single street, you could find little to divert your attention for even an hour. The fish-stalls might merit a passing glance if you cared about ichthyology. At times they contribute some curious specimens, and among some good table varieties you could distinguish the tiny *Lupea alba* (or something so closely allied to it that neither a close inspection nor a pretty sharp taste could establish a difference)—the white-bait of Western countries selling for almost nothing, and a most delicious little fish (*Leucosoma sinensis*), slender as an eel and clear as gelatine, in great abundance; with large piles of shell-fish, principally in a brownish bivalve shell covered with angular lines (*Circe castrensis*).

You might dwell on the outskirts of the large crowd always assembled before the open-air theatre, where the actors appear never to have got more than half-way through some drama of a hundred acts—each act requiring a month to finish; and where the jingling orchestra seem to have been engaged by the lifetime to play each his own composition; or you might ascend the look-out station not far from this show, and strain your sight a few miles further over the wearying gulf, or walk to the other end of the town and scrutinise, until your eyes were painful, the gaudily-painted and gilded temple dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy, or some other saint, in an elaborate style of architecture, which is made to serve as a place of worship and an archway for the many passengers who enter and leave the town.

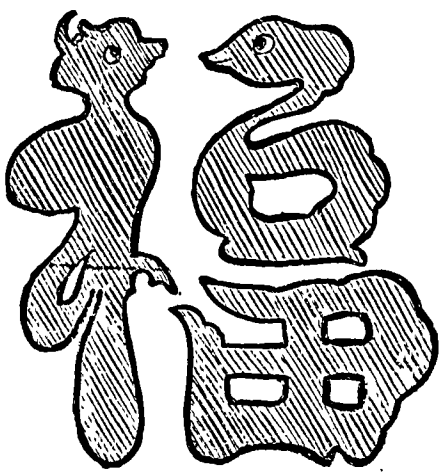
None of the by-lanes you would mind about exploring,

for Europeans who have penetrated a short way through the squalor and stench will have already initiated you into their mysteries, and given you a few of their new names, which are more expressive than delicate. The river may be the only attraction, and for a few minutes it is interesting; for there are moored in rows, four and five abreast, junks from nearly every port in China, whose forms, though based on the same principles of naval architecture, are as diversified as the places they sail from. A tutored eye would permit its owner no hesitation in guessing correctly, by their lines, and sails, and rig, their distant homes; for each owner prides himself on its style, though this may be as stupid and defective as the reckless beings who navigate them.

Shanghai has its immense ship, with square, acutely-sloping bows, and long verandah-like stern, a massive tall mast amidships, and a diminutive one fore and aft, a great eye on each side of the bows, and a number of the same on each quarter. Ningpo shows an unwieldy lugger, clumsy as a whale to look at, with but one mast in the middle, and a meagre spar at the bows. Chefoo sends a craft all concave and convex lines, smart as a Chinaman's dress shoe, and with three sails to drive it across from the Shantung promontory; while Tien-tsin marshals a fair crowd of two-masted arks, less bedaubed with paint, and more working-like than any of the others.

The groups of mariners on the highly-concaved decks are not without some claim on curiosity, but the insufferable effluvia springing up in dense volumes from the vile garbage on the crumbling bank, will effectually deprive the traveller of any romantic prying; and, longing for some other scene, he will seek temporary shelter, but little edified by the ramble. One thing he may have noticed, and that is the prevalence of the word FUH, which means, as an intelligent comprador tells us, 'plenty son, plenty dollar, and number two mandarin (or middle rank),' and is here substituted for the SHAU.

(longevity) of Tien-tsin and Pekin; written as it is in all kinds of fanciful ways, but more frequently as two birds pecking each other.



Fuh.

We could never understand what delight this people could take in throwing the saltatorial propensities of the great green grasshopper (*Phasgonura viridissima*) in abeyance by confining it in a tiny cage, where it night and day emits the most heart-breaking stridulous scraping possible. In the courtyard, around which the rooms we occupied were ranged, a number of these petulant males nearly drove me mad by their never-ending questions and replies, trios and quartets, throughout the whole night; the agonising bites of the mosquitos seemed as nothing to this hideous rasping. Every house, every shop-door, and every courtyard, had its full complement of these insects, and the din made by them was really intolerable. Added to this, was the nocturnal screeching of a music-ridden wight of a petty dealer, who made up for the dullness of trade by a traffic in the most discordant squeaking ever tickled out of the three-stringed native fiddle. My attempts to sleep therefore were profitless.

So after a day or two of Ying-tsze, it afforded us no mean pleasure to receive fresh passports from Mr. Meadows, enabling

us to begin anew our wanderings in the direction of Moukden. With a liberality of mind and spirit worthy of the author of 'The Chinese and their Rebellions,' these documents were made not only useful to the Mantchu capital, but might have carried us through the whole of Mantchuria and Eastern Mongolia, had time and opportunity allowed us such an interesting peregrination. Through his kind offices, and the strong complaints he forwarded to the magistrates of Newchwang, assurances were sent to us that a timely notice of our approach to every town and city on the route would be despatched, if we only named the day we purposed starting. This was assuring. Having taken into consideration the nature of the roads, and the trouble we had already experienced with our carter, we discharged him. We trusted to a pack-pony to carry all our necessaries to the metropolis and back, taking as few things as we possibly could, and avoiding all attempts at display.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUR NEW ATTENDANTS — PRECAUTIONS — INDISPOSITION — NEWCHWANG AGAIN — OUR CONDUCTORS — 'TEA IS NOT TEA, AND RICE IS NOT RICE' — A 'SOVEREIGN' REMEDY — THE VILLAGE SCHOOL-ROOM — SHU SHAN — THE MOUNTAINS — A DISTANT VIEW OF LIAU YANG — ORCHARDS — HARVEST-TIME — DISAGREEABLE SPECTATORS — THE CITY OF LIAU YANG IN THE EARLY MORNING — TRADESMEN AND MECHANICS — NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN PAGODAS — THE TAITSE HÔ — THE LIAU — HIGHWAYS — THE PEOPLE.

THOUGH informed from a very good source that a rebellion was on foot but a little way beyond the city for which we were preparing to start, and though warned that there might be danger in trusting ourselves near it, we could not afford to lose an opportunity then within the reach of so very few travellers; and, danger or no danger, we braced our minds for the undertaking as resolutely as we could, resolved not to return without seeing the capital of an extensive region — the metropolis so much vaunted by the dilettante Emperor, whose ancestors had founded it, and whose principal literary merit rests on the eulogy he composed for the purpose of exhibiting his scholarship, and bringing this remote home of his fathers into notice.

According to preconcerted arrangement, when we were ready to begin our travel one sultry morning, a remarkably fine-looking young man, becomingly attired in a clean white cotton suit and an over-waistcoat of blue silk, with the official hat and red-silk plume, waited upon us to show us the road, and give notice of our presence to the mandarins when we neared the towns. Though well mounted, he kept an easy pace behind, and left us to push on as hard as we

might, always certain of overtaking our party by near cuts, which his familiarity with the country enabled him to do.

Besides this man, and Ma-foo—whom despite his inebriety we could not get on without—another native of the seaport town was engaged for the expedition by a comprador, as a person who thoroughly knew the road, and had several times been in the large city. He was willing to lead our lightly-equipped pack-pony there and back, as well as provide for his own conveyance on the top of a tough old galloway that he rode with his heels instead of his toes in the stirrups, out of the comparatively small fee he had required for his hire. M. and myself were rather indisposed at starting, and we did not improve during the day. Prudence would have dictated our remaining until quite well; but time was becoming short, and the future movements connected with a return to Tien-tsin were yet somewhat obscure and uncertain.

Having made a start from shores rendered friendly by British hospitality, we made a good forenoon's work, though our sickness was so great that we had to stop for some time at a roadside hotel to procure a short sleep. In the afternoon Newchwang was entered, the scene of our late tantalising and dangerous reception. There our dandy follower disappeared, I suppose to give intimation of our presence, for before a crowd had time to gather, two or three ragged old men rushed down a street, flourishing sticks and bellowing loudly enough to keep back the suspicious characters, who would not have hesitated long in making themselves as disagreeable to us as they had done before. There was a better chance for seeing more of the town than on that occasion, because we had to pass right through it, and in broad daylight; but there was nothing to give it any claim to attention. The number of antiquated streets we traversed, though wide, dirty, and dusty, could exhibit only one tolerable house for every half-dozen in ruins, or nearly so; and the majority of the little shops contained nothing but

coarse native cotton stuffs, and wares manufactured in China. Pawnshops were numerous enough, and they formed by far the best class of building in the place.

We crossed what must have been a wide tributary of the Liau hô at no distant period, by a seven-arch bridge of wood and stone, and observed another spanning the nearly dry bed of this river a short way off. From the manner in which the town is built on both sides of this defunct water-way, there is no difficulty in concluding that its present almost lifeless state arises from the shoaling of its highway, for there was scarcely water enough in mid-channel to float a gig. The same causes which were, and are now in operation, in raising the land gulfwards, and elevating the beds of northern rivers, had converted what was at one time an important town into a straggling, languid mass of decaying shops and houses, tenanted by idle-looking people.

The road was excessively heavy to the northward of Newchwang, and we had abundant reason to congratulate ourselves on the good hit we had made in leaving the cart behind and resorting to pack transport; otherwise we should not certainly have accomplished the forty-two miles we did that day.

Not farther than two miles had we got from Newchwang, when our party was joined by another attendant—a bare-headed elderly man, but meanly dressed, riding a good bay pony, whose forelock was twisted into two upright horns by red tape, and its mane and tail plaited and knotted up in a fashion peculiar to this part of the country. The two emissaries kept a good deal aloof from each other and spoke little, if at all, the whole time I saw them; but as they never put up with us when we halted, they may have fraternised when the weight of our presence was removed from them.

An old house with the hoop and fish signpost was very thankfully hailed before darkness set in, for I really felt so

unwell and unfit for riding, that nothing but the most urgent determination to reach Moukden could have prevented my returning to the foreign settlement. Our usual excessive appetites failed us, and the most tempting of viands would have stood untouched before us, as we lay down on the hard *kang* to sleep that evening. Yet we thought that an effort must be made towards recovery, and that we must assist nature to reassume her sway by some means or other. We had no medicines, but we had a popular tradition, the essence of which, we thought, would be as effectual as, and far less unpleasant than, any unpalatable stuff compounded in rhubarb-smelling shops.

Some venerated philosopher or profound classical manipulator—it may have been the Emperor Kien-loong himself—had a favourite child lying ill—dying. In vain were all remedies prescribed and administered: in vain were all sorts of tempting and nutritious dainties coaxingly offered. The boy would not eat. Nothing would he manifest the slightest inclination for. All hope had nearly fled. The grieving parent suddenly bethought him of something that would excite a momentary desire, or perhaps a favourable issue to the case. It was TEA. A thimble-sized cup of the most fragrant infusion was immediately brought to the sick boy's bed. He pitifully averted his eyes and shook his head. The last remedy had failed: there was no chance now.

Yes! there was another. The most carefully selected grains of the choicest rice were tenderly boiled until they were like granulated snowflakes, and with loving hands presented to him. Loathingly the child turned his head away. 'Ah!' mournfully sighed the desponding parent as he saw these last sovereign remedies fail, '*Tza pu-sa tza; Fan pu-sa fan*'—Tea is not tea; Rice is not rice.

We ordered tea, but it had little of the bouquet or anything else of that plant's good qualities to recommend it; while Ma-foo superintended the boiling of rice, which cer-

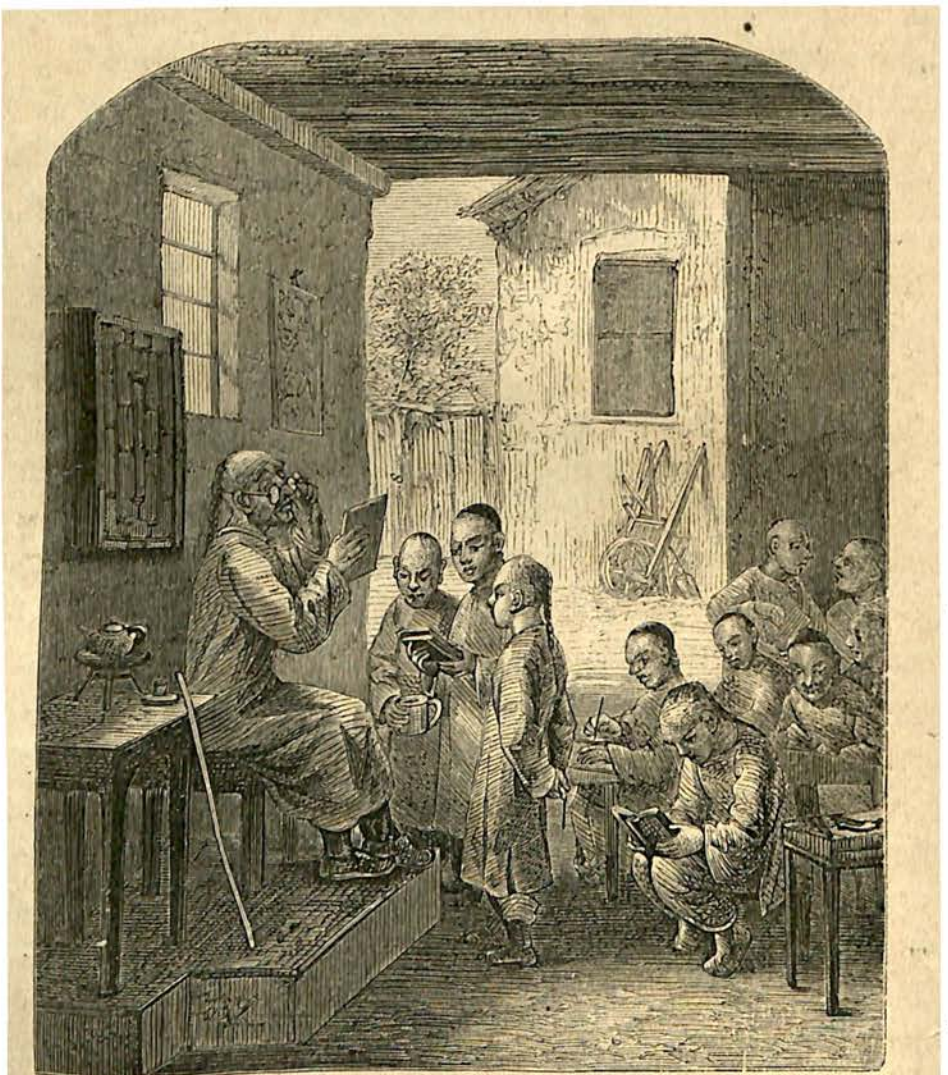
tainly came nearer our expectations; and conquering our apathy with all our might, we took a little of both.

Our situation was not so desperate as that of the youth's, for these staple commodities still retained their virtues and their enticingness, and contributed not a little, perhaps, to make us sleep soundly. At any rate we got up in the morning very early, and much better, to find that there had been a regular rain-storm, which had flooded all the roads—but that we did not mind—and that Ma-foo had prepared us a good breakfast of tea, rice, and eggs.

Our line of country was a difficult one, for the low-lying roads were nothing but canals, where carts could never go: so our guides put us into bypaths through the crops—paths made by some earlier travellers who had made lanes through the heart of the sturdy millet-fields. There was not much to cheer us, but luckily the day was beautifully cool, and felt home-like in temperature—the first time we had experienced such a happy sensation in the Central Empire. The further we advanced northerly the more marked this became.

When twenty miles had been put behind us a rest was ordered, and preparations for a midday repast began. The crowds were quite as great, and their uncontrollable curiosity quite as, if not more, lively as at the places along the gulf. One of the windows of our room looked into a small court-yard belonging to a village school, where we could plainly see the old dominie hard at work teaching a number of boys to handle the pen—or rather the brush. There was little difference between these studious youngsters and similar anxious little chaps in our agricultural villages. Here were pale little faces and anxious black eyes, lips covered with ink—left there when they were trying to screw fine points on their pencils—tiny fingers no better, and many a daub on the sleeves and cuffs of the long robe. The furtive glances thrown at us from the window were numerous, but often checked by a mild rebuke from the garrulous old master, who tried to be as

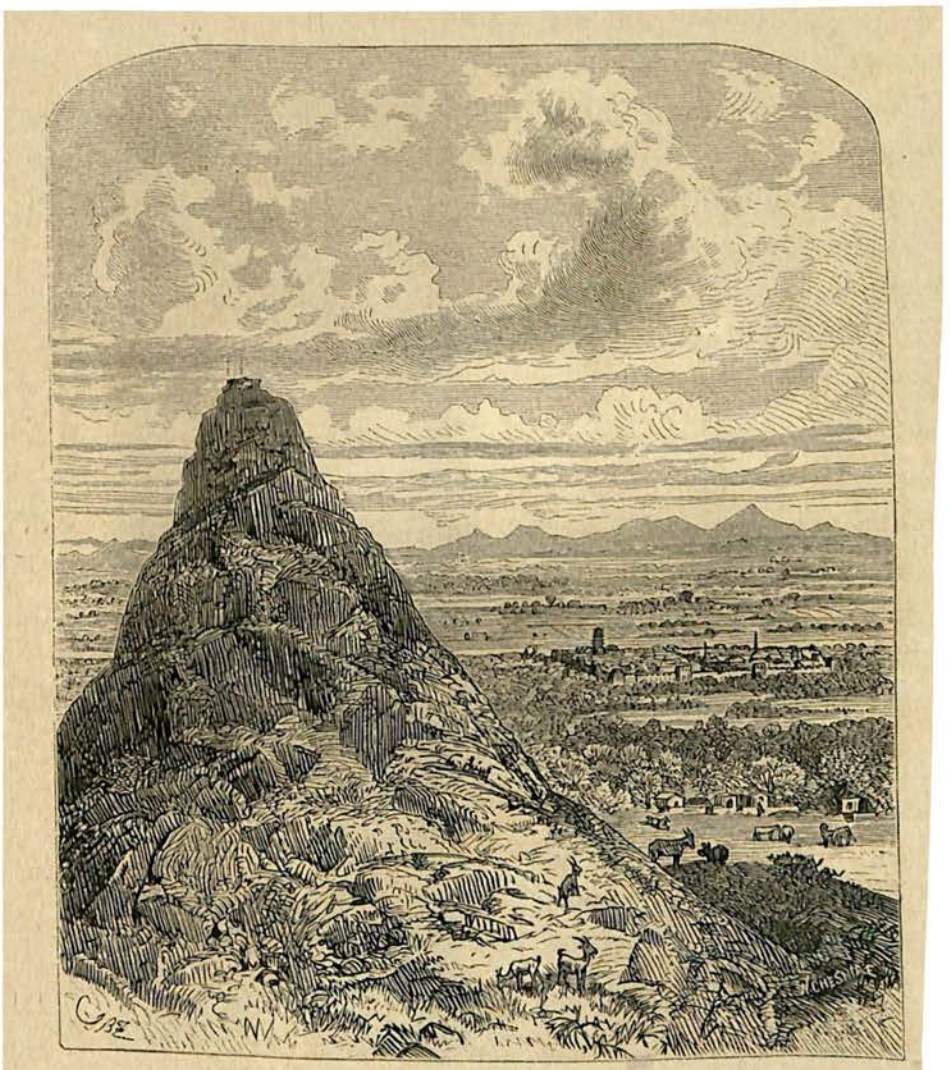
indifferent to our presence as if he had seen us all his life-time. Occasionally we caught a sight of him slyly looking over his glasses—such gigantic things they were—and peeping at us, but he slipped out of sight as soon as detected, and began to lecture some elder boys who were rhyming away at a lesson in the middle of the room.



The Village School.

When we got away again, no escort was visible, nor did we afterwards see either of the two men who had convoyed us thus far; but a ragged, ill-to-do fellow, who lay in a field watching a pony grazing, jumped up as we drew near, and

catching the roaming animal, mounted it, and cantered over to us. He introduced himself by a loud laugh, and then, in the most loquacious manner, commenced to tell his history, concluding with the news that he had been sent twenty miles to conduct us to Liau-yang — a large town.. This man was not only talkative but useful, and stopped in every village



View of Liau-yang.

to procure us water to drink. But after sixteen or seventeen miles, he too vanished most mysteriously, and left us to ferret out our road as well as we could.

In the afternoon we were quite close to the foot of the

high range of mountains, which, beginning at the gulf, runs in a direction from south to north, intersecting the little peninsula of Liautung, and extending as far as the palisade which separates the Corea from Mantchuria. They were jagged and lofty, and the lower peaks were rendered more gloomy in their greyish nakedness by scattered pines clinging here and there on their summits.

The An-shan river was forded, and an old-fashioned tumble-down sort of town—Shu-shan—with nothing better than a gaily-painted temple to look at, and streets belly deep in mud and water to plunge through, was passed, and then the narrow roads began to ascend and descend over an irregular country. About two miles beyond the last town, a very lofty hill of the same name rises up like a skittle-pin, with a little house on the top. From this a pretty view is obtained of the surrounding locality, and a far prospect of the green crop-covered plain westwards, with distant hills—the rough mountains before noticed, to the eastward; and towering, like an old-fashioned pepper-box, the pagoda of Liau-yang stands to the north in a perfect den of trees and verdure, where the higher country smooths down into a fine open landscape.

On the banks of the Sa-hô—another tributary of the great Liau—a good orchard of pear, apple, and walnut-trees was rigorously guarded by an old man, who politely warned us that we were not to trespass within the limits of the little boundary ditch, for fear of damaging the apple-trees, many of whose branches were so heavily laden with fruit that they were propped up by poles. The gardens here, too, were nicely laid out, and not a few of them were tenanted by sly-looking jetty-eyed young Hebes, with good-humoured nut-brown faces, and their gummed and plaited hair encircled by a garland of well-assorted flowers. They were not at all bashful; and, finding themselves safe behind the fences and palings, did not manifest any dislike to our presence amongst

them. Many had natural feet, and knew how to use them in climbing over obstacles to have a look and a laugh.

The fields of grain were rapidly ripening, and the care of the proprietors was extended to the erection of mat and pole structures, some feet above the general level, in which men were housed, whose duty seemed to be to keep a sharp look-out for thieves, and, assisted by exceedingly European-like scarecrows, to frighten away feathered marauders, now hovering about in clouds. Almost every field of any size had a little temple placed in it to propitiate the favour, as we supposed, of some god or goddess in the completion of an abundant harvest.

True to our resolve of not dwelling in any large town for the night, we stopped at an inn near Liau-yang, agreeing to pass through that town by the early dawn and before the citizens had time to get notice of our approach. Our experiment of travelling through such populous places in British costume, our very small number, and without anyone to offer us advice or protection in case of need, made us all the more wary and disposed to incur as little risk as possible; for it was difficult to guess whether our visits would be viewed in a hostile or friendly light, and the example of Newchwang rather tended to shake our confidence in the behaviour of the people towards two solitary strangers, who bore with them no imperial mandate to ensure respect. Besides, the city gates were closed, for it was long after sunset. Even had they been opened on our demand, the infrequency of such an occurrence would most certainly have attracted an undesirable amount of attention.

Our quarters were not good, and we were so besieged by a gaping crowd, that, summoning the host, we threatened to leave at once, unless he cleared out his premises, and permitted us to retain our room in peace. Poor man, he did all he could in the way of expostulating and reasoning, but to no purpose. Nearly all the mob listened and remained

where we were, and we fed, washed, wrote, and conversed before them—the subjects of many a strangely-ludicrous remark. Their society was, to say the least of it, unpleasant. The night was hot, and perspiring Chinese are no treat to the olfactories at any time; but when they come from their meals, additionally perfumed with onions, garlic and tobacco, they are offensive in the extreme.

Every act of ours was noted and commented on, and nowhere could we go that we were not followed by an inquisitive mass of busybodies. When we lay down to rest, the paper frames of the window immediately above our heads were simultaneously perforated by countless fingers, as if a cloud of grape-shot had been poured into them.

Five o'clock in the morning is generally, in other countries, a very early hour to find a large city fully awake and stirring; in China it is an advanced hour, for, get up when we might after day-dawn, everybody was at work, all looking as if they had been so for hours. In the suburb we found a great crowd awaiting our arrival, and, as we went on, this swelled to gigantic dimensions. Where we expected to see only a few people moving about, we were surrounded by a countless sea of heads. Entering the city of Liau-yang by the western gateway, we found ourselves in one of the principal streets, and at liberty only to glance for a few minutes at the interior as we passed through.

One great disadvantage we laboured under, was in having no itinerary or guide-book to refer to for historical or descriptive information regarding the towns and the districts we were wandering through; and in a city like this we felt that we should have lost much of the interest which must have attached to our brief visit, had we been in possession of any such aid. We could only glean from various sources that, during the reign of the Chow dynasty — some hundreds of years before the Christian era—the dominions of the Coreans extended as far as this city of the second order; that in the

time of the Tang dynasty, when China was the most enlightened country on the face of the earth, it was called 'The City of the Coreans in Liautung;' and that during the rule of the great monarch, Tai-tsong, of the same dynasty, the people of Sin-lo, being attacked by the half-savage Coreans, implored his assistance and protection, and he, marching to invade the Corean territory, got as far as Liau-yang, when he died; but his son finished the expedition by subjugating the enemy.

In the native geography of this province, published some two hundred years ago, it is noted that, as the city is of great importance, there is always maintained in it a good garrison. Of this we saw no signs, and even the guard-room at the gate was without a single individual who might be supposed capable of bearing arms. The wall was in decay, and in one place the greater part of the rampart had disappeared, portions of the parapet had crumbled down, and deep rents and fissures disfigured the face of this ancient fortification. In its best days, it could not have been more than thirty feet high, and must certainly have been less substantial than any other wall I have seen girding Chinese towns.

We had scarcely got within it, when two red-topped messengers, mounted on ponies which had been in waiting close to the gate, and our ragged friend of yesterday, sprung out from some corner, and saluted us with a series of grins and shouts not at all in consonance with our peaceful intentions. They fell into our train, and in less than a minute there was a procession behind us of everybody within hail. As we rode rapidly through the town, we were satisfied that Liau-yang was the most business-like place we had seen since we first began our journey. The streets were very wide, and flanked by large shops for selling all kinds of native wares. Every place looked as busy at that early hour as if it had been midday. There was an air, if not of wealth, at least

of active trade quite gratifying, but at the same time surprising at such a time in the morning. Wheelbarrows of goods were being shoved along by panting labourers; the spacious tea and eating-houses were crowded by those oily, lazy-looking occupants, who seem always to be eating, drinking, and smoking; fat semi-nude shopmen sat at their doors or behind their counters, as brisk as if they had not been, or did not require to go, to bed; or noisily bargained with wide-awake customers, so intent on making the most of their speech that they scarcely noticed us; while, in the workshops, the joiner was sawing and planing after his own fashion, finishing off excellent furniture, beautifully varnished or polished, or measuring and fixing up the massive planks of timber which Chinese undertakers believe to be necessary for the protection of their dead.

The blacksmiths, with unwashed faces, pelted away lustily at the molten iron, which fizzed and threw out ruddy sparks against leathern aprons, wooden walls, or the legs of passers-by. The barbers scraped, plaited, and steeped the stubbly heads of their early-rising patrons, or twirled their gigantic vibrating tweezers as a signal of their whereabouts.

The flour-sifter was heard with the pulsating beat of his rocking sieve, sifting the fine from the coarse flour. The weaver, after an obsolete fashion, could be seen assiduously, but with painful slowness, throwing the shuttle from hand to hand through his weft; and perhaps next door to him the shrill twanging strum of the cotton cleaner's bow, would fall smartly on the ear. Cooks puffed and blew over cakes, dumplings, and stews, and potages of nondescript quality; and hawkers of vegetables, bread, or nutritious compounds, bawled out the names of their commodities in quite a musical cadence. The samshu shops, too, drove a little trade by selling their perniciously strong spirits to dissipated wretches, who begin the natural day by an unnatural stimulus. These shops have an interior not at all unlike that of an apothe-

cary's, with jars all round and great labels on them, and numbers of little square leaden measures placed in order on shelves. Strange to remark, on the street face of their counters they have painted in their most elaborate style the character 'Shau'—longevity—which our teetotallers might think as inappropriately placed there as on the coffins exhibited for sale at the undertaker's.

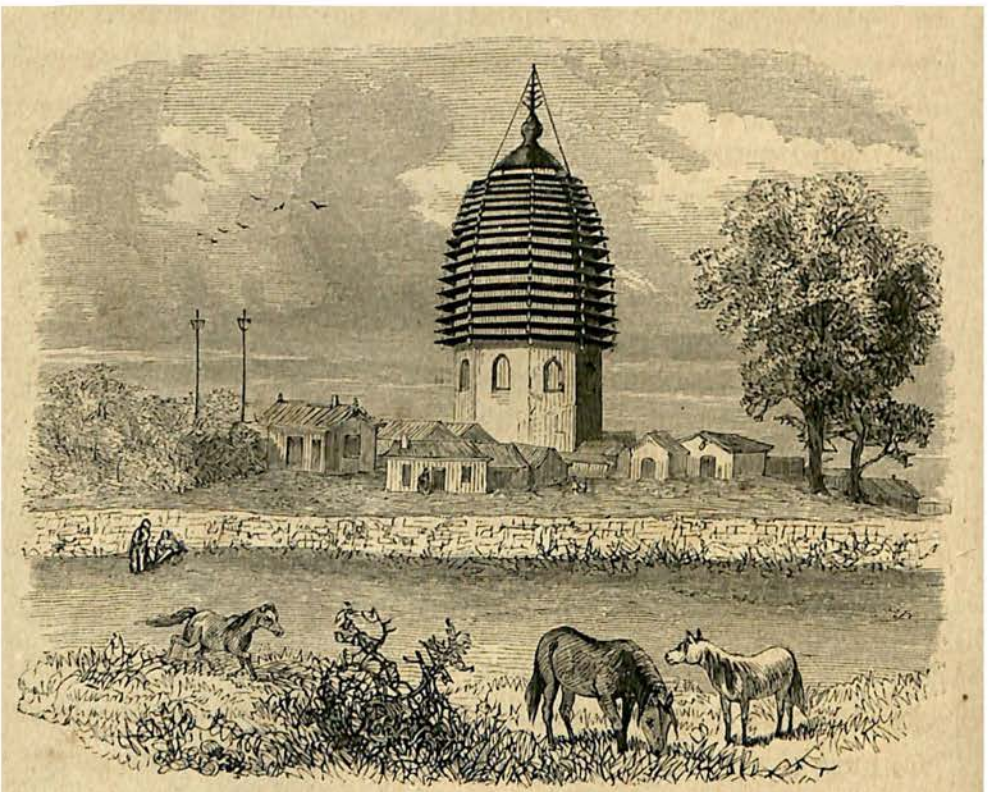
There were many large houses by the way, with wide courtyards well stocked with merchandise; but we had little opportunity of examining these, for the street had by this time become so densely crowded by people who gathered to see us pass, that our conductor, who understood our antipathy to mix much in these mobs, suddenly wheeled up another street—a bye one—where nobody was waiting, and so disappointed the expectant multitudes.

We were not long in getting beyond the region of shops and traffic, and into the quieter parts of the town where gardens abounded. Here, as within the walls of nearly all the northern cities of China, as it used to be in the old cities of Assyria, and as it is in many Eastern walled towns at the present day, there were large spaces of ground at each angle of the quadrilateral *enceinte* laid out as kitchen gardens or orchards, and nooks channeled out into ditches and pits for the reception of rain water—at Peking there is even pasture land within the enclosure—this being the only provision, I suppose, made to supply the wants of the people when closely besieged by an enemy. These gardens were perfect models of neatness, and their proprietors were busily displaying their skill and care in those horticultural pursuits for which they are so famous.

From a house not far off the road we were being led through, and which had a temporary roof of matting raised over it, like the roof of a temple, came the clanging of cymbals, gongs, and tom-toms, sounding the crankiest funereal music ever listened to, and celebrating the noisy obsequies

of some defunct townsman in an everlasting allegretto movement, having almost as much pretension to be called music as the clank and jar of a fire-engine over a rough pavement.

The majestic pagoda we had noticed yesterday as we approached the city, was now within three or four hundred yards of us, and as we had freed ourselves almost entirely from the crush of spectators by the sudden *détour* our guide had made, there were a few minutes left to admire and



Pagoda of Liau-Yang.

sketch it. From where we saw it, its proportions seemed very perfect, and to it the town owed all it possessed in the way of novelty; for reared to a height of eighty or ninety feet above the plain roofs of the single-storied houses, and the low garden walls, it looked noble and imposing only by contrast, and carried novelty with it in its strangely-fantastical shape and adornments.

If any feature is more unique and characteristic than

another in a Chinese picture, as painted by Europeans, it is the pagoda of Southern China, which is ever in the fore or background, and is deemed the only fitting accompaniment to the flat features, long robes, and plaited locks of the groups of celestials introduced to give life to the landscape, and to add variety to the odd-fashioned boats, fir-clad hills, or rice-covered plains; so that a drawing intended to represent Chinese scenery, Chinese industry, customs, costumes, or national eccentricity, would lack one of its best ornaments did the draughtsman omit to introduce one of these structures.

When the traveller arrives in the land, and begins to look about for these architectural vagaries of his new friends, he finds himself as familiar with their lineaments as he is with the figure of his parish steeple. The little octagonal houses, piled one upon another from the ground high up in the air —some of them elevated enough for an eagle's nest—until they form a sort of Cleopatra's needle, with long projecting eaves over every tiny chamber hung round with bells, to be climbed only by some Jack of the Bean-stalk, are scarcely a wonder to him; but when he comes to know more of the people, and finds them in ideas, fashions, and prejudices, so unlike every other nation now existing, and nearly realising what he has read of the old Egyptians, Assyrians, and other nations passed away, the pagoda is invested with a certain degree of interest which is inseparable from everything really Chinese.

But the northern pagoda is as different from that of the south, as are the two peoples from each other. At Tungchow, near Peking, I beheld the first example; to the western side of that capital I discerned two more, and again near the Liau-hô river on our journey, another had been remarked, built on a high hill; this of Liau-yang was the best by far. The form of a pepper-box will give a tolerable idea of its shape; but all the equidistant curved eaves of the Canton pagoda have

in this been compressed into one-half the space they there occupy, thus leaving the lower half of the eight-sided structure bare and blank,—with the exception of a gothic-shaped blind window, and the upper half closely garnished with bristling ridges, from each corner of which faintly-sounding bells were suspended; while the whole was surmounted by a black convex metal roof, with a long barbed spike rising from it, having lines of wire or rope passing from the very apex to the body of the edifice.

Turning to the eastward angle of the walls—here in a good state of preservation, though the parapet was very narrow and irregular, we came to a rather narrow and low arch-way, which our guide told us was named the 'Gate of the Coreans.' It was that by which the Coreans were allowed to enter the city at fixed periods of the year.

We left Liau-yang by this gate, and all at once came in sight of a nicely-wooded plain, with rugged hills in the distance, and a wide river—the Taitse Hô—winding silently towards us. The early morning sun gave all the charm and freshness to the scene that it was possible to impart, and the dewy mist rolling upwards from the low ground lent an air of coolness and freshness quite unknown at that time of the year nearer the gulf.

We were obliged to ride some little way along the river's bank in order to reach the ferry, and in doing this we met several families out for an airing before the sun became too warm. The women were well-dressed, with their hair done up with flowers, in the double smoothing-iron handle shape; and their movements were not disordered by the cramped feet, though they might have been more pleasing had they not worn such thick-soled shoes. The children rolled and tumbled in great glee, or gathered wild flowers at the foot of a very old high earthen embankment running parallel with the river for nearly half a mile.

Crossing a small divergent stream, we came upon a great

number of boats of very light burthen, lashed together and moored to the bank. The largest of these could not be capable of carrying more than two or three tons, and doubtless they were well adapted for transporting goods up and down such a tortuous watercourse as the Liau-hô. Nearly all of them were laden with beans and pease, which appeared to be the sole articles of export everywhere in this district, lying in a loose state in the bottom of the skiffs and ready to be transferred to the heavier coasting junks at Ying-tsze. Many of the crews lived in temporary mat dwellings on shore, and were intently engaged in preparing their breakfasts when we surprised them. Beyond a doubt they were a turbulent lot of burly fellows.

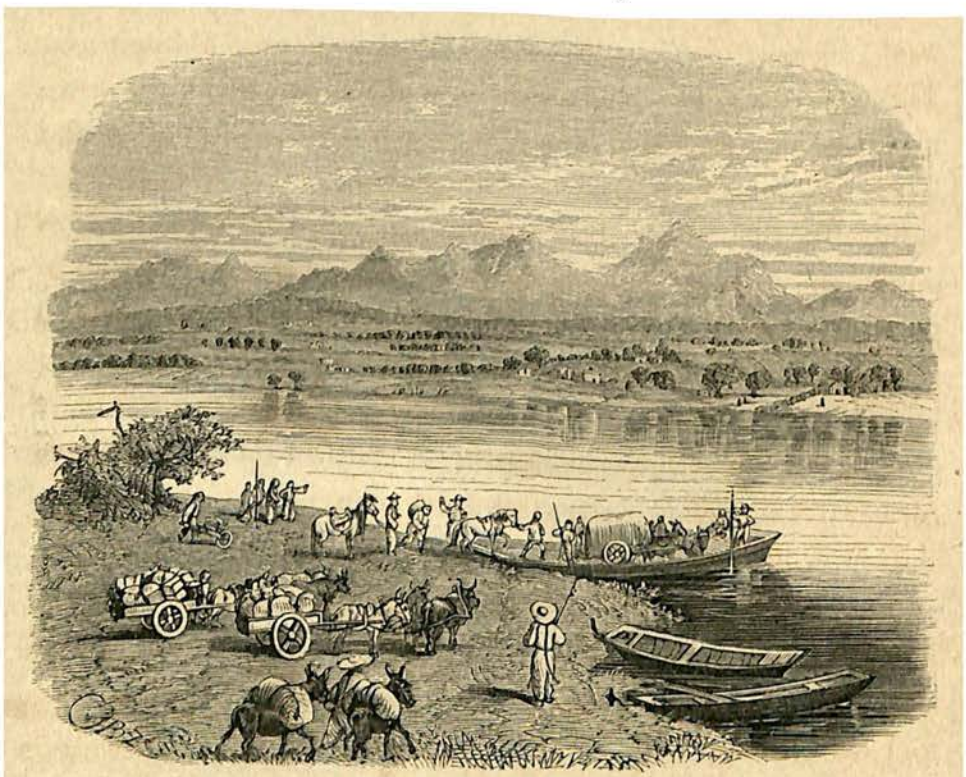
There was quite a crowd waiting for the ferry-boat, which was slowly emptying itself of a large cargo on the opposite bank.

Pedestrians who had been a long time on the road, and were armed with spears, reclined on the grassy bank; mounted men dismounted, and taking their packs off their saddles, spread them out and squatted down on them. There was a blind, venerable-looking, old man led by a boy, who was describing us to him in the best way he could; and there were passenger cabs, bullock wagons, wheelbarrows, and all sorts of conveyances, heaped together to be carried across. There, too, stood two lanky saffron-complexioned scouts sent to note our arrival, and see us fairly on board beyond the jurisdiction of the Liau-yang magistrates.

The way which these fellows sprung up in all sorts of odd corners and out-of-the-way places—the unceremonious manner in which they attached themselves, barnacle-like, to our persons without speaking a word or changing countenance in the slightest degree, and vanishing again at uncertain places without being noticed, was something marvellous. Assuredly the solicitude of the local authorities on our behalf made us feel rather constrained and annoyed sometimes, and I fear we did not so fully appreciate their kind motives as we ought to

have done. We were courteously allowed to embark about the beginning of the crush for the boat, and got good places to stand on while we held our ponies quietly by the head.

From the close proximity of the Taitse Hô to the town of Liau-yang, it must afford a valuable means of carrying on a brisk trade between that place, all the other towns on the Liau-hô and its tributary streams, and those beyond the Gulf of Pechili. Undoubtedly to this advantageous circum-



Ferry by Liau-yang.

stance Liau-yang owes its existence as an important grain emporium; for a Chinese city without a canal or river transport, is like a limb in which the principal artery has been tied—it quickly withers and dies.

Its width could not have been more than 120 or 140 yards, and its greatest depth 8 or 10 feet—quite sufficient, certainly, for the fleets of lighters employed. Its velocity may be about four or five miles an hour, as it flows from east to west

through a muddy strip of land, with a high bank here and there, but generally with low sides, which it often overflows and denudes entirely of vegetation.

From its size, it might be inferred that this was one of the largest tributaries of the Liau; and we find in an old native geography of this province, that one branch of this river is described as rising beyond the frontier on the north-west, in a distant region; and another, having its source to the eastward, is formed by the different streams which flow to the north-west of Chang-pe-shan, the classical mountain of Mantchuria. This on its way receives other minor rivers, until it separates into two branches that travel onwards until they rejoin and form one which bears the Chinese name of *Coo-Liau-hô*, signifying the 'great river whose course is very rapid.' This passes the town of Hai-cheng-hien, where it forms a junction with the one here—the Taitse Hô, which in other days used to bear the Mantchu name of Tiger river—it is then called the Santcha-hô, or river of three branches. A little lower it is designated the Liau—in Tartar it used to be named the Sira-Muren river—and passes to the sea.

It was now only 120 lí, or about 50 miles, to Moukden, and we were not, therefore, much surprised to find ourselves passing along a fine wide road, with grand old trees on each side, and with a somewhat lively concourse of passengers on foot or on horseback, going to and from the river; for here is the character of these highways written by an emperor more than a century ago: 'The roads which traverse it (Moukden),' says Kienlung, 'are straight, spacious, even, and well distributed; the pathways which border them are commodious, useful, and agreeable.'

Perhaps they may have been allowed to remain without much repair since that time, for we could see nothing of footpaths, and in the hollows ruts were heavy and deep, and anything but even. Travellers' carts found some difficulty in getting through them; and produce wagons, piled up with

sacks of grain, were very laboriously pulled along by their teams of twelve or sixteen animals, notwithstanding the sonorous *wo*'s, *turr*'s, and *ta*'s, and the startling detonations from the gigantic whips plied by the brawny arms of the drivers at almost every stride.

If the Chinese are ready to take advantage of water as a medium of communication and traffic, and show some skill in their manner of doing so, on land they signally fail; and though possessing the necessary materials for the formation and repair of the important roads which lead from one large town to another, in an abundance of stone of excellent quality found in the immediate vicinity, yet they never avail themselves of the opportunity, but leave the rain and wind to gradually fill up the breakages caused by the narrow-rimmed wheels. What a change macademised roads would effect in such a richly agricultural country!

Little towns and villages were frequent, and though they were inferior to those we had seen on the other side of the Wall, still they were busily thronged by people at work in gardens or farm-yards, who were sure to be ungraciously surprised by some busybody announcing the approach of two strangers. The men differed but little from those westward, but all the women were taller, more robust than the average of Chinese females, and walked on natural feet. Their faces were pleasanter, I think, than those of the Chinese, all the more so for the ruddy brown complexions they wore, and the wreaths of red and white flowers around their hair. They looked a strong healthy race, and we found it a great relief to get away from painted skins, dwarfish figures, and crippled feet. Some of these bouncing ladies we observed hard at work threshing wheat with flails, and using the spade and hoe like men.

We were not a little amused when, at a sudden turn of the road, we came upon a valiant petty mandarin of the military type, who bestrode a large mule equipped for a long journey,

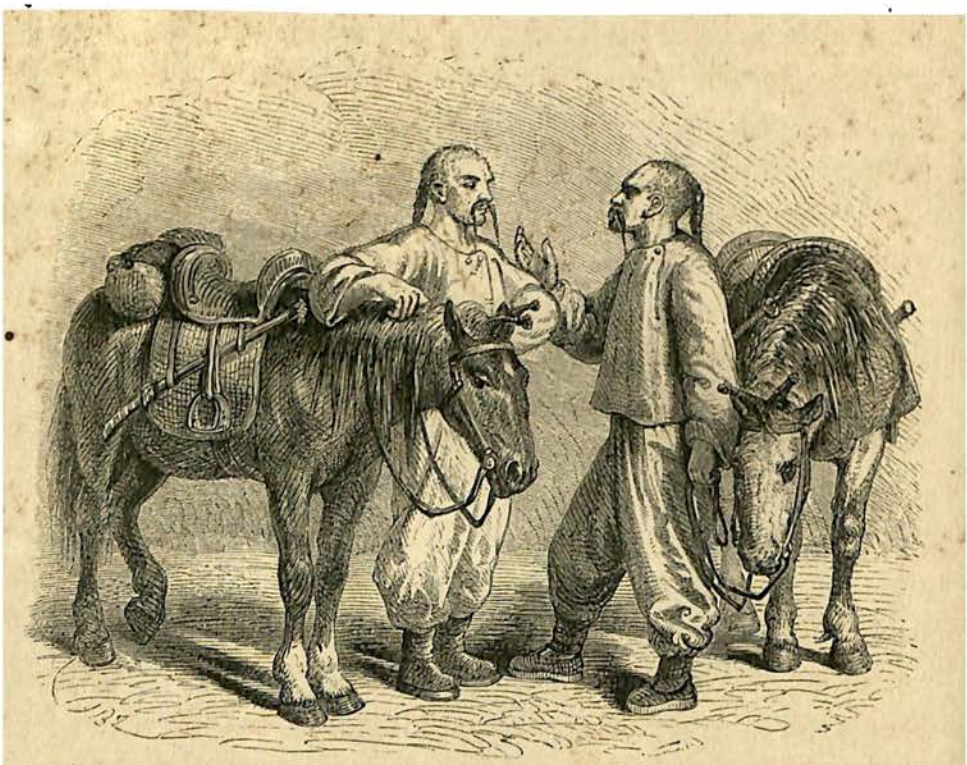
if one could judge by the accumulation of gear about his saddle, the presence of an oiled paper coat, and a grandly-ornamented sword of a decidedly theatrical appearance, *minus* a guard, stuck under his left saddle-flap. Two attendants similarly got-up rode in advance, and, as we almost bumped against them, they were thrown into a most unmilitary state of confusion and panic, and fell back on the brave gentleman. He was obliged to *make way* for them by retiring on that precipitate mule of his; and, ensconcing himself between two cavaliers who rode behind, and who managed to rally the others when they found we were really peaceable mortals, he waited until we had passed. Then we left them worrying each other by all sorts of hard questions as to who or what we were, and whither we were going.

The better class of wayfarers whom we met, still carried their weapons of offence or defence; and though these were not very formidable, yet one would have supposed they were often effectual enough for the intimidation of robbers, two or three of whose heads we noticed hanging up in cages to the trees. Even the pedlars mounted arms; and it was impossible to forbear smiling when a slim young scion of that branch of industry—like anything but a fighting man—passed us with a rusty scabbardless sword of most portentous breadth, and twice the length of his pack, stuck between the cords which bound his small fortune. He seemed a veritable Corporal Nym, and the very man to exclaim, when pushed to extremities —

'I dare not fight, but I will wink, and hold out mine iron. It is a simple one; but what though? It will toast cheese, and it will endure cold as another man's sword will; and there's the humour of it.'

Once we met an old man and a young woman astride of a gaily-caparisoned little donkey, that trudged along and was apparently nowise loath to carry the loving couple; and at the door of a village caravansary, we found two cavalry

soldiers resting from some long journey. Broad-set strapping fellows they were, with the ruddiness on their cheeks trying to make itself manifest through their deeply-tanned skin. Their clothes were none of the best, even for Chinese soldiers; their heads had not come under the barber's hands for some time, and they looked fatigued and hungry; yet they had a free-and-easy rough-and-ready bearing about them



Tartar Soldiers.

which rather prepossessed me in their favour as soldiers, and they seemed to have lots of *stamina* for many a long ride, little to eat, and bad weather, as well as for the more serious concomitants of war. Their ponies were very small, but wiry, with their long tails and manes tied securely in rough plaits and knots, and their forelocks bound up in tufts like horns. The dusty saddles were worn-out, and very old, and had the antiquated sword slung on one side, and the

small matchlock, ornamented with red horse-hair at the stock and muzzle, on the other. They scarcely bestowed on us one or two furtive glances, when they resumed the animated conversation with the other travellers, which we had rather suddenly interrupted.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ELEVATION OF THE LAND — TOWN OF PAY-TA-PU — GAMES OF CHANCE — THE HUIN-HÔ — CURIOUS MONUMENT AND LLAMA PRIESTS — SUBURBS OF MOUKDEN — THE POLICE AND THEIR COMMANDER — CLEARING THE WAY — THE STREETS AND TRADES AND THE CROWD — A FAT BONIFACE — CONDITION OF THE CAPITAL — TARTAR TRACES — A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

SINCE leaving Newchwang, the country appeared to be rising, yet so gradually as almost to be imperceptible; and it still bore the same well-tilled agreeable aspect it had done, with some few exceptions, all along our ride. Harvest operations had just commenced; the weather was lovely; and there seemed to be nothing wanting to complete the happiness of the peasantry, who thronged in the fields singing and toiling. Everywhere, the land — which was light — looked to be productive and rich in all the elements necessary for the culture of the plants grown upon it, without requiring a very great amount of manure or labour; and the neighbourhood of the hills, with the prevalence of sea breezes, must have greatly favoured the abundance and quality of the cereals so largely dealt in.

As we advanced, we got glimpses of never-tiring scouts galloping a long way ahead, who did us no manner of service, so far as we could see; but who, on the contrary, collected all the idle and curious of all the hamlets and villages near by their reports, and we found these assembled at some convenient spot close to which we must pass, where they pryed, joked, and speculated regarding us.

The people were, however, to all intents and purposes—con-

sidering the wonderful sight of two such mortals as we must have appeared to them — civil and well-behaved, and not a fault could we find with their conduct in any way. Their bewilderment was sometimes beyond all description. I think I shall never forget the eager anxiety of two blind villagers, who knelt in front of one of these congregations, with their arms clasping young boys, to know all about what we were like, and everything concerning our appearance that could be conveyed to them by words.

In a pretty little stretch of rural beauty, but where the road was a complete canal and forbade a passage to our ponies, we were obliged to pass round a village through a narrow path between hedgerows, in order to gain a more secure footing and a readier highway. While doing this we heard the mumbling of a voice as if a person was reading, and, glancing over the fence, saw a good-looking country-woman in her garden perusing a book. Some remark we made disturbed her, and darting at us but one brief and terrified squint, she sprung up from her seat, took to her heels like a startled hare, and bounded over the lower shrubs and furrows, swift paced as Atalanta, the daughter of Schœneus. Unluckily—and before we had time to assure her of our innocuousness and mortality—something tripped her up, and she sustained a heavy fall on the hard ground; but this little diminished her alacrity, for she was up and away again in a twinkling, until concealed by the trees. Her ideas must have been rather deranged for some time afterwards.

Towards nightfall we reached the neat little town of Pay-ta-pu, where there was a very picturesque pagoda rather the worse for wear, built in the South China fashion. Here our Ying-tsze conductor wished us to remain for the night, as we had been a long day in the saddle; but being some eight or ten miles from Moukden, we were intent on pushing as

near to that place as possible, so as to get in at a good hour next day.

After a deal of murmuring we resumed our course, and sprawling about in the dark, through long fields tenanted only by black pigs, and frogs, and toads, whose croakings were awfully dismal, we were compelled to halt in a very wretched assemblage of hovels boasting of two inns, one of which was occupied by ragged men gambling by very dim lights.

'The great Khan,' says Marco Polo, 'has prohibited all gambling and other species of fraud to which this people are addicted beyond any other upon earth;' but the great and little khans who have succeeded Kublai do not seem to have understood the proper means for the suppression of games of chance, for in everyone of these places, whenever two or three men got together, the dice bowl and cards formed the only amusement. In this case the accommodation was so bad, and landlord and guests were so deeply engaged in their game, that we were driven to an opposition hostelry: where the proprietor, after the surprise we caused in his bosom had subsided, received us with more attention, and rather unceremoniously ejected a number of questionable individuals who had been staking their cash, smoking their tobacco or opium, and drinking their samshu. The long room was awfully dirty, dusty, and cobwebby, and the hurried brushing of it by two or three imps nearly stifled us; yet glad were we to find a place to rest and sleep in, though surrounded by filth and breathing an almost pestilential atmosphere.

The strip of country we passed through before reaching the Huin Hô, or Muddy River, was not particularly interesting; and there was nothing to betoken the vicinage of a large city in the universal hush and stillness around us. This river, another tributary of the Liau, was of a good width, and the few clusters of masted lighters gathered at

odd bends of its course, proved that it was navigable thus far. The current ran fast over a shingly bottom, and as it was unfordable, rafts—consisting of a platform lashed on two small boats—were plying across with passengers. The scenery on the banks and away beyond, was not unpleasant. The mountains were toned down by distance into a bluish-grey as they receded towards the east; before us was a closely-wooded level; and to the right and left, gardens and fields. Wherever a foot of ground could be cultivated, there stood its allotment of millet, beans, or wheat; and when it proved obdurate, there was the labourer at work trying to improve it. The high ground and the northerly direction we had pursued, ensured us the benefit of a climate, than which nothing, we thought, could be finer. The sun had lost much of its intensity; the sickliness of the lower land to the west and south had vanished, and we felt that we breathed a respirable and enjoyable atmosphere.

The last three mornings had been indeed delightful, and the beneficial change the weather had wrought in us, conspired to make our trip an exceedingly happy one.

We ferried across the stream. We discovered it to be of variable depth, from the fact of our ponies—which were being towed behind the raft—finding bottom twice or thrice before we got to the opposite side. It was now only a mile to the capital we had so ardently longed to reach, and to visit which we had ventured so much.

We climbed the gentle ascent from the Huin Hô, and were much gratified to find ourselves in a regular park of old willows, gnarled and hoary, growing at random over a large expanse of ground. The coolness of their shade was delicious, and it was a treat to feel the elastic turf spring under one again, and to inhale the air that hung about the pendent branches so lightly. It was singularly pleasant to revel in the mingled light and darkness caused by the early morning sun flashing through the gaps in the leafy canopy, and to know by the

undisturbed nature of the ground, and the venerable appearance of the timber, that this small forest was

'Not by art,
But of the trees' own inclination made'—

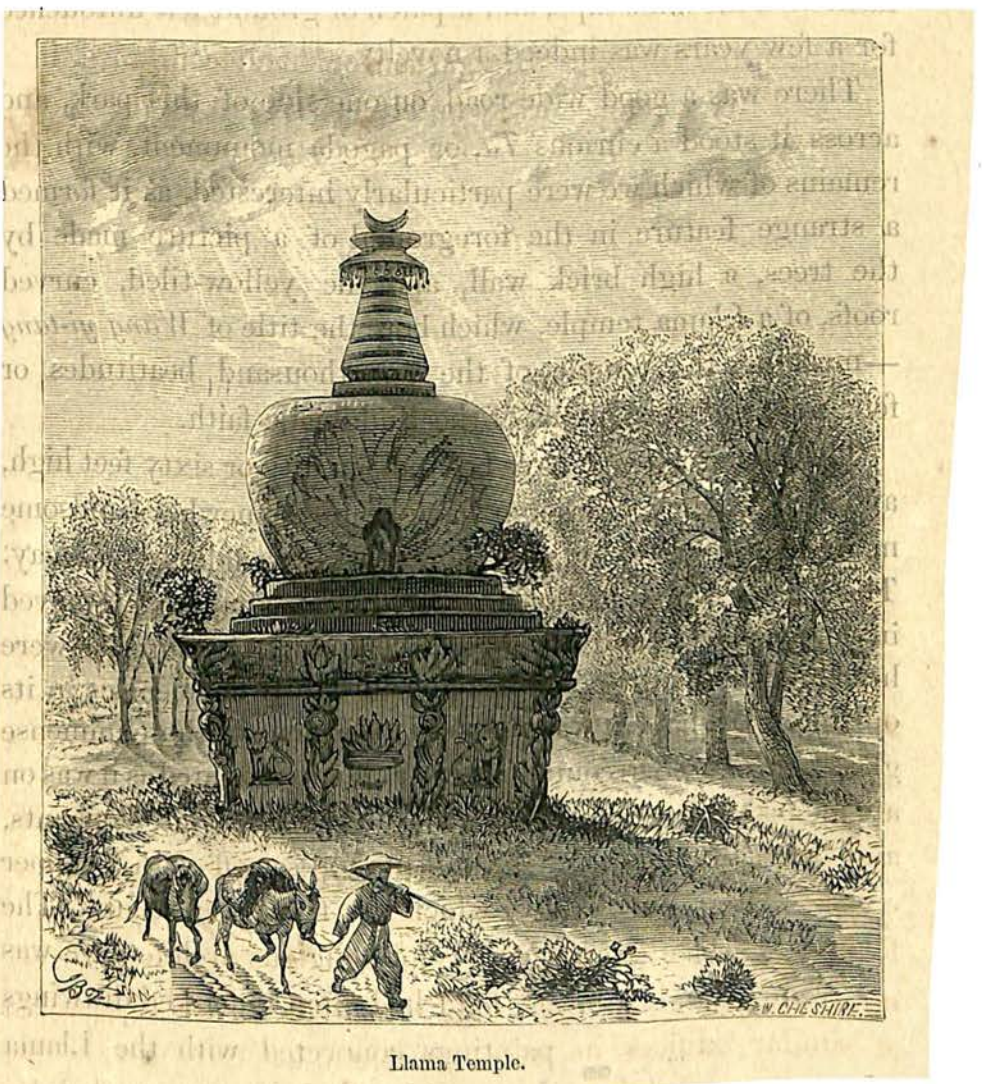
for everywhere else on our journey the hand of man had fashioned the landscape, and a patch of ground left untouched for a few years was indeed a novelty.

There was a good wide road on one side of this park, and across it stood a curious *Ta*, or pagoda monument, with the remains of which we were particularly interested, as it formed a strange feature in the foreground of a picture made by the trees, a high brick wall, and the yellow-tiled, curved roofs, of a Llama temple, which bore the title of *Wang yi-tang* —meaning the temple of the ten thousand beatitudes or felicitous transformations of the Buddhistic faith.

This structure may have been about fifty or sixty feet high, and many, many years ago have been a somewhat handsome monument of the kind, but now it was fast falling to decay. The plaster which had once covered it was altogether removed in many places, and the bricks composing its interior were here and there abstracted, leaving unsightly deficiencies in its outline. In shape it was not very unlike one of those immense glass bottles used to contain vitriol at home, mounted as it was on a wide pedestal, ornamented with the tutelary dogs, elephants, and other Buddhic symbols, and its top set off with a copper curtain fringed by bells, on which was fixed a crescent. The form of this antiquated variety of religious architecture was not quite unknown to me, for I had often remarked drawings of similar edifices in paintings connected with the Llama doctrinal creed. In a large niche in front, surrounded by lotus leaves, or something intended to represent flames, there was a character inscribed in red paint, but it was so effaced by time as to be illegible.

Plants grew thickly on every place that could give them a hold, and a young tree had fixed itself in a very conspicuous

situation, while the snowy whiteness of the lime that had in byegone days deeply coated this monument, was soiled and furrowed by the weather. As we were attempting to make a hasty sketch of it, a little host of Llama priests, in their yellow robes and cleanly-shaven heads, closed around us, and



Llama Temple.

they, with a crowd of stragglers, entirely frustrated our purpose; for in their irresistible desire to see what was doing, and to watch the movements of the wondrous pen that required no ink—as they styled the pencil—they brought their faces and unpleasant breath into such near contact, that we

were glad to bid them an abrupt good morning, after they had informed us that there was a pagoda like this one on each side of the capital.

The road led us into a suburb with but ordinary houses, at first scattered, then drawing closer and closer on both sides, until we reached a low narrow gateway—which might have been the entrance to a garden or small courtyard, in a mud wall that stretched away on either side, about the height and width of what could be cleared by an ordinary hunter, and covered with grass and young willows.

This, which we had nearly passed without noticing, we afterwards discovered was the outer wall of the city of Moukden, and enclosed what might be called the suburban or commercial portion of the Tartar capital. Entering this gateway, and passing a small hut on our left, before which sat two snuffy old carles, blinking at some four useless spears in a rack, we were in the south street of the outer city, within sight of the towers and parapet of the imperial enclosure, which are not unlike those of Peking; and in the midst of a bustling, yet orderly crowd, that kept rapidly augmenting as the buzz of surprise and excitement drew the more industrious from their labours or occupations within doors.

The street was wide—almost as wide as any we had seen at Peking—and a great deal better to ride in, for there were no ruts or holes to break one's horse's legs in, or pools of stinking water to avoid, though there was a good deal of dust. The shops and houses, still single-storied, were regularly built; and the unsightly inequalities on the sides of this and the narrower streets which branched off from it, caused by some disreputable hovel standing forward half-a-dozen feet in front of the others, were very few and almost exceptional.

Before we had ridden a hundred yards through the running and shouting crowds, we were made aware of the

presence of a *posse* of the guardians of the peace, who seemed to have sprung out of the ground, under the leadership of a valiant superintendent. This responsible commander was a little withered old man mounted on a very diminutive donkey, and almost hidden from observation by a great conical summer hat, far too large for his minute skull, covered as it was, too, by a tremendous red official fringe that made it look like an enormous scarlet flower, the calyx of which had been reversed — extinguisher-fashion — and lashed to his chin. A pair of glistering mouse-eyes peered out at times when a sudden movement threw the silken curtain to one side, and then we could see they were busy enough looking out for offending small boys and easily-terrified young men.

The quadruped he bestrode was scarcely larger than a middle-sized Newfoundland dog, but it was fairly buried between a gigantic pair of black satin boots with canoe-shaped toes and clog soles of unimpeachable whiteness, thrust as far as they could go into a ponderous pair of brass dragon-mouthed stirrups.

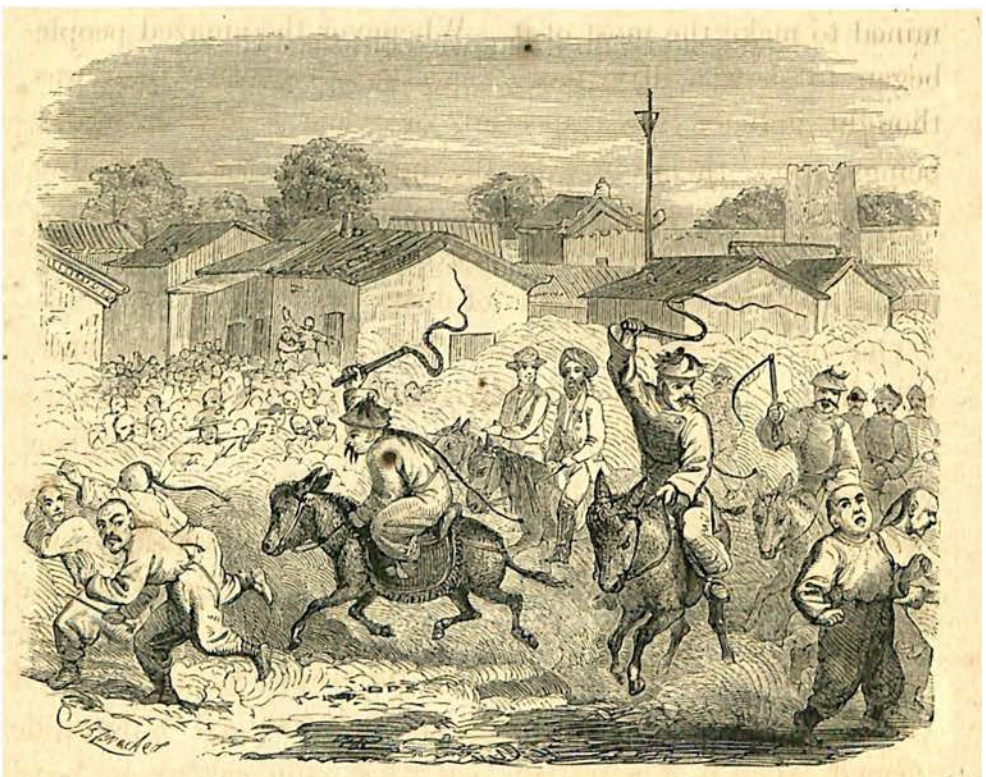
There he darted about like a firefly, with his meagre body badly done up in white cotton and primrose-coloured gauze, and with boots and hat almost touching each other, giving his orders in a torrent of squeaking aspirations, against the mirthful character of which there was no use attempting resistance.

He was as closely attended as might be expected from a man of his active habits, by a great fat fellow, evidently a subordinate, who sat perched upon the croup of an ass, anything but up to its work, and wriggling along at a very uncomfortable pace. This was possibly a deputy-inspector of the Moukden police, as our shrimpy little friend was visibly a full-blown inspector, from the great deference paid to him by the inferiors of that respectable force, who marched so closely about us as nearly to blind and suffocate us with

dust. Poor little man! the officious and very conspicuous zeal with which he headed the efforts of these constables to conduct the intrusive strangers within the walls of the city were strikingly comical. Like the law-serjeant of Chaucer's satirical sketch in the 'Canterbury Tales'—

> 'Nowhere so busy a man as he there n'as,
> And yet he seemed busier than he was.'

Pouncing from one side with a great-small shout, he would stoutly charge a flying body of ragged urchins, ably seconded



Entrance in Moukden.

in his daring deed by the animal he held within his knees: for between them there must have been some sort of sympathetic communication, matured through long years of contact, and during which the hair of both had become silvery grey, as the donkey required no urging or tugging, but intuitively made for the tiniest and slowest-going boy, because he

was easiest reached or followed; and when the regulated number of whacks from the short-lashed whip had fallen with due precision on the bare head or shoulders of the grinning vagabond, the two would return to their post again, followed by the stout aide, who had some difficulty in managing his long-eared steed, and was continually puffing, blowing, and perspiring from the unwonted exertion.

Though busy enough looking about for something novel in this newly-discovered city, our attention was distracted every few minutes by these over-prudent servants of justice, who evidently thought they had a good job and were determined to make the most of it. Whenever the amazed people began to show a little more anxiety or curiosity than was thought judicious or respectful, or when a few impulsive beings stuck themselves in the middle of the road, at a squeak from the chief, a bellow from the second in command, and a general shout from the 'force,' cuts of whips and lively jumps enveloped us in clouds of dust.

One of these fellows pointed out a lane to our conductor, who immediately wheeled down, and led the way until we came to an inn, where in the courtyard the landlord was found meditating amid heaps of bricks and mortar. A confused jabber and clatter of tongues was at once set up, which at length ended by our being informed that there was no suitable accommodation for us—a mild way of announcing that we were not wanted on the premises: so a prolonged conversation between another functionary and our guide ensued, when it was settled that we should go to an hotel within the imperial wall.

Houses, stores, and workshops ran up to the very base of this wall, and in many of the latter we saw armourers at work manufacturing matchlocks, and bows and arrows in large quantities. From the external gate in the external earthen bank to this inner gate, the length of the street may have been fully three-quarters of a mile, and all along it was

crowded with tradespeople and artizans, who looked both healthy and happy.

That was indeed a proud and joyful moment when we gained the large bastion—which differed from all others we had yet entered, by having two archways, one on each side—and, rattling over the granite slabs that paved the intervening space between it and the inner city, found ourselves within the real limits of the Mantchu metropolis. What less could I do than doff my turban and reverentially salute the grim walls which then contained two Britons, for the first time known as such here, and concealed by no native artifice or borrowed costume? We had gained our cherished object at the end of a long journey, the termination of which no one could prognosticate without some feeling of doubt or alarm when it was begun.

Small space was given to see where we were, for the crowd, though a stationary one, extended in every direction, and precluded all chances of examining the houses or character of the wide thoroughfare into which we were now launched. Fortunately the promised inn was near, and we made a kind of triumphal entry into the neat courtyard, where another body of police armed with huge whips like the Russian knout stood ready to receive and to guard us. An active *red-faced* little mandarin stepped forward and took our party in charge at once, without giving us the slightest verbal intimation to that effect.

An order to his men to clear the square of the mob that had burst past our late escort outside, was but partially successful, though cuts and shouts were freely used to enforce it.

The host, or manager, or whoever he was, came to the front, and tried to be as amiable and talkative as an undersized man can be who is labouring under a strong sense of asphyxia from fatty accumulations everywhere—but more especially in the region of the face and throat—and is

quaking from a great dread of our presence. He introduced us to one room, which had been a lumber store previous to our arrival. We, without delay or scruple, objected to the insult. He strove to remonstrate, but made such tedious and painful efforts to speak through his constricted windpipe that we had no patience, and, we fear, as little sympathy for his corpulence: so we rushed out of the detestable apartment, fully impressed with the idea that the people wished to degrade us by lodging us in the filthiest rooms in the house.

Another hovel was then thrown open to us, worse if possible than the last, as it was in a state of thorough dilapidation. We would not look at it, and loudly protested against such uncourteous treatment of far-travelled strangers, who civilly claimed their hospitality and were willing to pay for it.

The mandarin commenced a long harangue with the asthmatical host, who would maintain that his house was engaged, and there was nowhere else he could put us; but when he saw that we were not to be imposed upon, he suddenly remembered there was one room yet unoccupied, and with no good grace he took us to it.

Enclosed within a little brick wall fancifully built with lots of crucial spaces in it, this chamber was certainly better than the others, though it was dark and dirty: so, being tired with bothering, and nearly choked with dust and thirst, we consented to take it. A few minutes' rest sufficed to refresh ourselves sufficiently to think of moving out to see how the population and their rulers stood affected towards our perambulating the streets, and visiting whatever might be worth looking at; and as the larger portion of the vast assemblage of Moukdenites had been driven or talked away from the courtyard by the police, the opportunity promised well for a ride, as our ponies were still saddled and ready. The guide whom we had brought from Newchwang said he

knew the city well, and gave us reason to hope that we should be amply repaid for our trouble, as there were many things of great interest in the place.

There were a number of well-dressed people loitering about outside expecting to get a look at us, and as soon as we launched among them another buzz and tumult of wonder and astonishment burst out from them, as well as from the throng held back in the street by the merciless thongs of the guard. To them everything about us was dumb-foundering, inexplicable, or marvellous, and the manifestations of their emotions were as various as in any western crowd—though, perhaps, our friends were more polished and civil in their behaviour than the generality of mobs we have seen nearer home.

Some were rather apt to giggle and titter at our unshaven heads and faces, and to crack facetious jokes at our expense; others were lost in admiration with the leather of our boots and the cloth of our coats; some would persist in doing nothing but stare intently in our faces, as if they expected us to turn them upside down; two or three looked astounded and perplexed, apparently, at our audacity and independence in venturing so far alone, and the cool easy manner with which we moved and conducted ourselves; while others, scarcely satisfied with looking freely, used their sense of touch, and laid inquisitive fingers upon us—one in particular was found with his hands in the bottom of one of M.'s coat pockets. A shriek of agony and alarm broke from an old man who, on hands and knees, was squatted behind me to inspect more closely my hunting-spurs, when I unwittingly stept back and sent the sharp rowels into his nose and thigh.

Just as we were about to mount, and M. was giving directions to the guide, a petty official, many of whom were dodging about and watching our movements, stepped up and whispered loud enough for M. to hear him, that the man

was not to go. This advice or counsel to our conductor at this early period of our visit was not to be borne, and my companion at once hunted the fellow off.

As soon as we emerged from the gateway of the inn, some eight or ten lusty guardians on foot attached themselves to us, and by their noisy demonstrations were speedily attracting that attention far and near that would have put an end to our explorations, when we started off at a smart trot northwards. In a few minutes they and the multitude were out-distanced, and we were at comparative liberty to move about where we liked, so long as we did not stop at any one place and give the people time to collect.

If Peking was a disappointment to those of us who, in the preceding year, had expected to see a great and a grand city — a capital with superb palatial buildings, streets unsurpassed for width and cleanliness, and crowded with triumphal arches, where all the wealth and magnificence of a rich and mighty empire had been stored — and if we had found it as unpleasant as opening a musty old tome that has been lying covered with mildew in some mouldering ruin for centuries, and in which moth and maggot have done their work, leaving only the massive buildings which envelope the decayed leaves intact — then Moukden could indeed lay claim to having excited in us a degree of pleasurable surprise, until then unknown in our rambles in the land.

The great regularity of the streets—the ample breadth of the principal ones—the absence of filthy and indecent displays at their sides, such as everywhere offend the eyes and nose in Peking; the uniform height and frontage of the shops, and their respectable, though far from gaudy appearance, and the total absence of tumble-down wooden arches, or *Pai-lus*, such as in almost every other town obstructed the way or marred the prospect; quite took our good opinions by storm, because the change was unexpected,

for we had long ceased to imagine that a tolerable city existed in the country.

Moukden, so far as our experience went, was pronounced to be the Edinburgh of the Middle Kingdom. The people were well, though not luxuriantly, dressed, and I do not think during our stay we noticed a beggar or a ragged individual within its walls. There were large stands of cart-cabs with excellent mules in them, superior to those of Peking. There were capital shops with large open windows, in which were counters for the sale of furs, native cottons, dye-stuffs, grain, and medicines, as well as ready-made clothing; but we could perceive nothing European, save a couple of boxes of German lucifer matches which we saw when we afterwards had an investigation on foot. A good proportion of these shops were kept for the manufactory and sale of bows and arrows, and in some of them there were splendid specimens of the skins of eagles and vultures.

We passed several large Yamuns or government buildings, before which were drawn up dozens of cabs, and crowds of attendants awaiting the convenience of their several owners who were within, probably discussing questions concerning the management or mismanagement of a province the length and breadth of which is estimated at 700,000 square miles. Each of these public offices was guarded by rows of high black *chevaux de frise*. The great number of officials—whether mandarins, servants, or soldiers we could not always distinguish in the crowds and dust we often got involved in, struck us as extraordinary for such a small city, and such a comparatively unimportant capital of a province beyond the Great Wall.

Booths and stalls there were none, and even the nomadic vendors of eatables, and the peripatetic craftsmen of all grades and trades who roam freely elsewhere, were here invisible. We looked closely for some indications of Tartar existence, but without success, except in some streets where

shops were devoted to the fabrication of figures or effigies made of reeds and covered with paper to represent men and women servants bearing cups of tea and other things necessary for a feast; and in addition, horses and stags, modelled and painted in a sporting style, such as we could fancy the Mantchus—as we had read of them—might appreciate, and desire to have burnt at their graves to do them service in the next world.

Something of this kind is mentioned by Marco Polo as taking place at the funerals of Tartar princes in his day, but the victims were living beings. He says, after speaking of the invariable custom of interring the bodies of the grand khans and chiefs of the race of Ghengis Khan at a certain lofty mountain, no matter where they may have died—'It is likewise the custom, during the progress of removing the bodies of these princes, for those who form the escort to sacrifice such persons as they may chance to meet on the road, saying to them, "Depart for the next world, and there attend upon your deceased master," being impressed with the belief that all whom they thus slay do actually become his servants in the next life. They do the same also with respect to horses, killing the best of the stud in order that he may have the use of them. When the corpse of Mongu, the fifth Tartar monarch, and grandson of the great Kublai Khan, was transported to this mountain, the horsemen who accompanied it, having this blind and horrible persuasion, slew upwards of twenty thousand persons who fell in their way.' And in the year 1661, Shun-chi, one of the early emperors of the Mantchu dynasty, perpetrated the dreadful atrocity of ordering a human sacrifice on the decease of a favourite mistress; but one of his ancestors, Tien-Ming—so writes the Jesuit Martinius in his account of the conquest of China by the Mantchus—vowed, when invading China to avenge the death of his father, that he would celebrate the

burial of the murdered king by the slaughter of two hundred thousand Chinese.*

These figures seemed to us to be the only relics of this custom, and the sole testimony of the existence of the Mantchu nation, for we could gather nothing else concerning them.

Near the end of the long street we had first hurried along was a low archway, over which there was a bell-tower or *chang-lu* in a rather shaky condition. Speeding through this we reached the wall, and soon were in the outer city again; but as there was nothing to be seen here except a shattered pagoda, we returned again to the wall and entered by a west gate. This was a quiet part of the town, and as everybody had been outstripped except a few wild young scamps, who managed to keep pace with our ponies, and a small wicket was hard by that opened on the steps leading up to the top of the brick wall, the temptation was too strong to be resisted. A momentary glance over the city from such an elevation would tell us more than days of painful search, and was indeed the only apparent means of arriving at any sort of correct idea of the plan and dimensions of a large city like this, standing as it did upon a level plain.

Bacon's advice to those who were about to make the *grand tour* in his time seemed now to be for once in our excursion followed. 'They are,' says he, so far as memory serves us, 'to set forth on their journey under some tutor or grave servant, and their objects should be the courts of princes, churches, fortifications, cities, gardens of state.' Here was our grave servant ready to afford us any assistance or information that could come from within his narrow limits, and there was a fortification—the only one the place could boast of, and from which we were to have a prospect

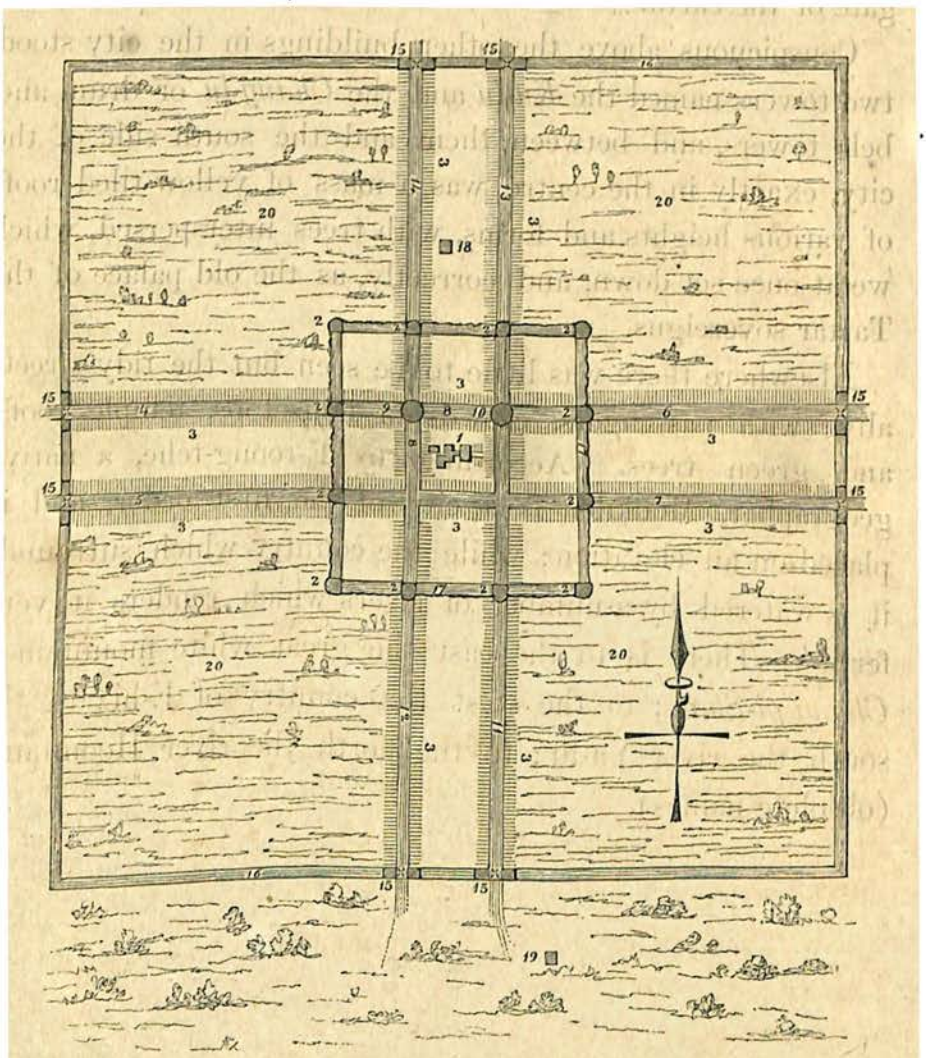
of the other details mentioned. The idea was at once acted on, and leaving our ponies to shift for themselves, we opened the wicket, ascended about a dozen steps to a small square landing of brickwork, and then mounted the inclined plane that led to the rampart, where we were exceedingly gratified to find the city mapped out for us below in a far more satisfactory way than if we had traversed the streets one by one.

The wall itself exhibited little to make it different from other city walls, and, so far as we had time to notice, it was a fac-simile of the Peking fortification on a smaller scale. Its height might be about thirty-five or forty feet, its width at the base about twenty-five, and the top fifteen feet; and everywhere it was in good order. The towers, twelve in number, were intact, and those nearest us had good doors firmly locked. The single parapet was crenelated in the ordinary way, but at its junction with the rampart were numbers of small apertures inclining obliquely downwards, for the purpose possibly of pouring a vertical fire or boiling water on the heads of the assailants immediately beneath. The boundary of the outer wall may have been from ten to twelve miles. The inner or imperial had a circuit of about three or four miles.

The outer city contained the largest warehouses and the working classes, but a large portion of its extent towards each angle was either taken up by gardens or lying waste. The outer as well as the inner wall had eight corresponding gates called great and little, though there appeared to be no difference in their size — from which the eight principal streets ran, and intersected each other towards the middle of the imperial town, giving an appearance of regularity and convenience to the whole rather pleasing to the eye.

An ancient Chinese authority mentions with regard to these eight gates, that they correspond to the eight principal winds. In the book of customs of the Ta-tsin (the present)

dynasty it is said, 'The city of Moukden has eight gates—two to the south, one of which is termed the doorway for the introduction of the numerous virtues, and the other the entrance gate for the admission of the Protection of Heaven (one of the early Mantchu emperor's titles); two to the east—one named the gate of attentions for those who are



Plan of Moukden.

1. Mantchu Palace. 2. 2. 2. 2. Wall Towers. 3. 3. Principal Streets in the Imperial and External Cities. 4. 5. 6. 7. 11. 12. 13. 14. Main thoroughfares. 15. 15. 15. 15. 15. 15. 15. 15. Entrance Gates in the External Wall. 16. External Wall. 17. Internal, or Imperial Wall. 9. Ku-lu, or Drum Tower. 10. Chang-lu, or Bell Tower. 8. Streets into which the Palace has private entrances. 18. Pagoda. 19. Llama Pagoda and Temple. 20. 20. 20. 20. External City, composed of dwelling-houses, artificers' shops, stores, and at each angle waste ground.

near, the other the portal which guards the interior; two to the west, of which the first is the gate of affection for those who are afar off, and the second, the way by which the strangers, and tribute-bearers come to pay homage; of two to the north, one is called the gate of victories which brings back good-fortune and power, and the other the honourable gate of the earth.'

Conspicuous above the other buildings in the city stood two towers named the *Ku-lu* and the *Chang-lu* or drum and bell towers, and between them and the south side of the city, exactly in the centre, was a mass of yellow-tiled roofs of various heights and forms, with trees interspersed, which we at once set down, and correctly, as the old palace of the Tartar sovereigns.

Elsewhere there was little to be seen but the tidy streets alive with passengers, crowds of housetops, temple roofs, and green trees. According to E-toong-tche, a native geographer, Moukden is a city of the first order, and is placed on an elevation; while the country which surrounds it is watered by a number of rivers which renders it very fertile. There is to the east the great white mountain—*Chang-pi-Shan*; to the west the country of E-hi; to the south the river Ya-lu; to the north the river Hoontoung (obsolete names).

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HISTORY OF MOUKDEN — ACCOUNT OF IT BY FATHER VERBIEST — KIEN-LUNG'S EULOGIUM OF THE TARTAR CAPITAL — THE PEN AND THE KE — POPULAR EXCITEMENT AT OUR APPEARANCE — A MOUKDEN MERCHANT — THE TARTARS AT A DISCOUNT — OUR VISIT TO THE PALACE PREVENTED — THE WATER-GUN — LOWER TEMPERATURE AT MOUKDEN — CHINESE ARTIST — RETURN JOURNEY — LORD JOHN HAY — DOING THE DRAGONS — ON BOARD THE 'ODIN' — REVISITING THE WALL.

THE place wherein Moukden now stands is the same which in the almost traditionary times of Yau (2357 B.C.) bore the name of Tsing-chow; in his successor's time, Eng-chow; in the time of Han (206 B.C.), Liau-toong-kiun; and under the brilliant Tang dynasty (A.D. 618), Nan-tong-tau-hau-fou, that is to say, 'the place which guarantees rest and tranquillity to the eastern people.'

Under the Tartar houses of Liau and Kiu, in the 13th century, it was sometimes called Tunking, or the Eastern Court, and at others Liau-yang, or the Sun of the Liau. Under the Mongol or Yuen dynasty, it was commonly called Shin-yang-lou, signifying properly 'the path of the sun;' and under the Mings, the affix *lou* was changed to that of 'wi,' city or burgh, and it was then Shin-yang-wi, the city or burgh of the sun; but the Mantchu warrior, Tien-ming, the 'Providence of Heaven,' having made himself master of the country to the east of the Great Wall, some years before his death deliberated with his friends on the choice which he ought to make of a situation for his court. It was concluded that this ought to be in a city, purposely built. The city was

accordingly founded, and received the designation of the Eastern Court; but when his authority and influence began to extend itself to the Chinese side of the Wall, he did not hesitate to remove his residence to Shin-Yang.

Five years later (1630), his successor, Tai-tsoung, pulled down the walls of the city, and rebuilt them on a larger scale than before, as well as improving the buildings generally. From this time it was called Moukden, a word derived from the Mantchu, signifying 'to grow,' 'to rise,' 'to augment in wealth and honours,' 'to flourish.' This monarch gave to his reign the title of Tien-tsoung, meaning 'by the palpable manifestation of Heaven,' or 'the light of Heaven,' because he believed he had been called by the Divine Will to rule over China. His son reigned here in that orange-tiled palace, but his grandson, the conqueror of the Chinese Empire, preferred the court of Peking.

In the 10th year of Kanghi (1681) the walls were repaired, and two years later the towers above the gates added, about which time Father Verbiest came in the suite of his imperial master, and in the course of his narrative—to be found in Du Halde—he merely says of it, 'Shin-Yang, the capital of Liau-toong, is a pretty and complete city, and shows the remains of an old palace. Latitude, 41° 50′. The needle has no variation here. Some Coreans having presented the Emperor with a sea-calf, he showed it me, asking whether Europeans mentioned it. I told him we had a book in our library at Peking that treated of its nature, and had a cut of it. He longed to see it, and immediately despatched a courier to the Fathers at Peking, who brought it me in a few days. He was pleased to find the description in the book answer to what he saw, and ordered the fish to be sent to Peking and kept as a rarity.'

The enthusiastic Kienlung, a century later, exhausts his scholarly energies in eulogising this city, first in the Mantchu language, and then in some sixty-four different forms of

Chinese writing.* Before visiting the native place of his fathers, he begins at Peking his poetical *chef-d'œuvre*, by an appeal to their virtues and exalted qualities, though perhaps forgetful that the ancestral princes immediately preceding the noted Tien-Ming were nothing better than marauding chieftains of a petty Tartar horde residing in this neighbourhood.

'The Empire,' the old translation runs, 'being transmitted to my humble care, I ought to leave nothing undone to keep alive or to follow the virtues of my ancestors; but I justly fear that I shall never be able to equal them. Every day I meditate profoundly on the means which I ought to adopt to aid me in feebly imitating them, and to render them a tithe of my gratitude—every day I prostrate myself before their portraits, and I render them the most sincere homage. It is at these times above all that I am transported in mind to Moukden—to those venerable places, the most illustrious, the most glorious, in my opinion, of all those which the heavens has formed.'

Soon after, he reaches this city, and continues: 'Arrived at this place, where my ancestors in other days held their court, I found my heart overflowing with filial piety, and I exhibited all the proofs of it of which I was capable. I worshipped the smallest things that might represent the slightest vestiges of my fathers.

'I saw with a lively and inexpressible joy those mountains covered with verdure (a mild draw on his imagination), those rivers where rolls a pure flood (now they are strongly tainted by mud), that fertile country, and those enchanting places which seem yet to feel the presence of their ancient masters.

'Above everything else, I admired the people, so sincere and good, who live happily because they are content with their lot, and who live without fear because they live in the honest abundance of all things.

* In the poem before mentioned, as translated by Father Amiot.

'Behold, said I to myself in a transport of delight, behold really a kingdom that Heaven favours! It is now I am penetrated by that satisfaction and bliss, which makes the true happiness of a sovereign. It is now I can praise myself for seeking those sanctified places, which have been the nursery of those only whom we can regard as veritable kings.

'Yes, it is of these spots that the most remote antiquity has spoken with so much praise under the names of Pen and of Ke.* It is sufficient to have been reared in Pen or in Ke, or only to have dwelt in the country for some time, to be acknowledged fit to govern men! You, whose position to the north of the waters of Simia (called in Chinese *Shin-shuay*, probably a general name for the waters of Shin-yang), insures to the atmosphere surrounding you a constant salubrity; you, that the grand rivers and the lofty mountains render a fitting bulwark to protect the world:—illustrious city of Moukden, you are distinguished from every other city in all the other countries of the universe, as much as the tiger and the dragon are from all other animals. It is on you that the great empire of Ta-tsin (the Mantchu dynastic title) has laid the solid foundation on which it is reared. The deep ditches that have been dug around your walls—your walls themselves, which are so strong and so high—guard you from all surprise and all danger. You are at once the heavens and the earth. You represent the two all-potent principles—the Yang and the Yin.

'It is within your walls that we distinguish and appreciate everything; it is there where the nine descriptions of markets are found (disposed according to the old Chinese custom, one in each quarter of the principal winds, and one in the centre—devoted to the sale of different commodities),

* The *Pen* and *Ke* of the reign of Chow, and the *Foong* and *Pe* of Han, are the old poetical names for this country.

and the warehouses of five classes; it is there that the real doctrine of Kings—so far as being taught to govern men well applies—is found in all its vigour, and it is from thence that this knowledge is spread to enlighten the rest of the world. You are, O Moukden! the Pen and the Ke of Chow. You are the Foong and the Pe of Han! Better than the village of Pe-shuay; better than the Palace of King-chang,* you are the proper place to prepare and to produce Kings. The heavens which canopy us, shine with nine kinds of rays (in allusion to an old poem which says, "the red light that margins the horizon exhibits nine colours"); the earth that bears us contains in its bosom the chief of all treasures; it throws them open to us,—it brings them to perfection,—it distributes them liberally according to our wants or our desires. Do we cultivate it in order to gain from that which in itself would produce nothing? Then it gives us always a hundred-fold of what we have confided to it, and this of the best.

'The mountain of Chang-pe-Shan that stands near you, and conspicuously towers above all the other mountains (it was invisible from our part of the Wall, as was the entire range of mountains), shelters you on one side, while an arm of the Great Sea guarantees you from danger on the other. Your situation—which is of the most secure and commanding—your form and disposition—indeed, all that which constitutes you a city, gives us cause to hope that to the most distant generations you will preserve the pre-eminence you have acquired above all other places on the earth.

'It is already more than a hundred years since you began to be the mother of those without as well as within. You nourish both; you maintain them: you enable them to live in tranquillity, in abundance, and in joy. When these reflec-

* The village of Pe-shuay and the palace of King-chang are both celebrated places in Chinese history.

tions present themselves to my mind, I feel myself actuated by a stronger impulse to perform my duty, and render myself worthy of the throne which I have inherited.'

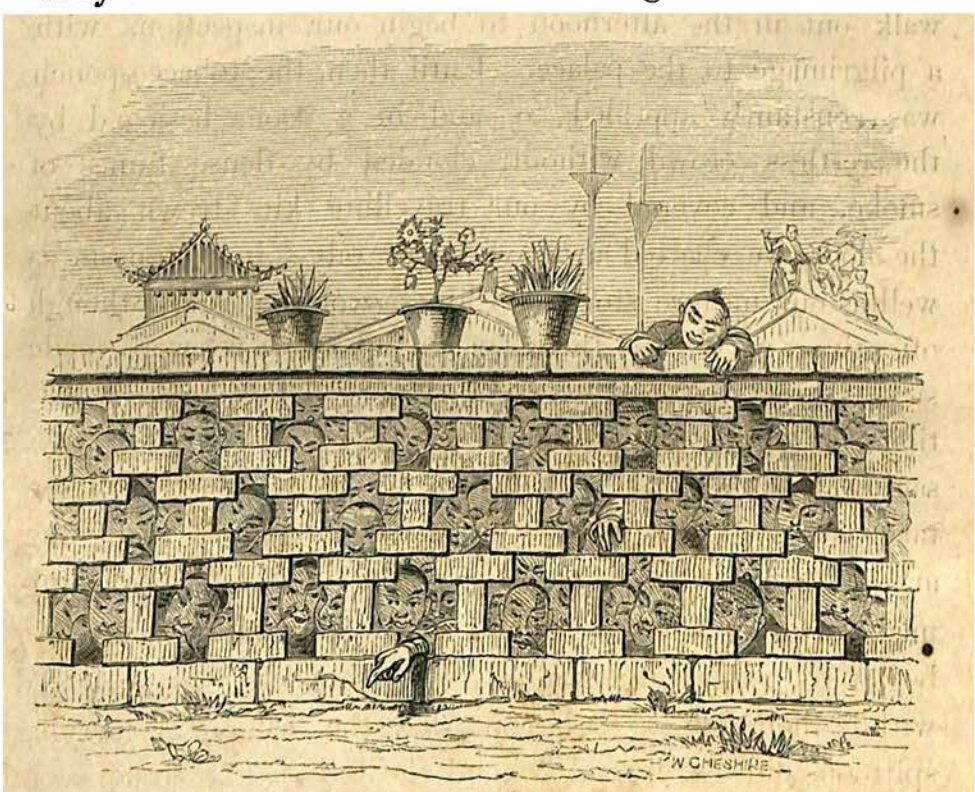
This rather vain and high-flown language was scarcely applicable to Moukden as we now looked at it; and 'the fitting bulwark to protect the world' appeared but an ordinary north China city; though cleaner, in better preservation, and laid out with more regularity, certainly, than any other we had visited. Hastily making a rude map to enable us to find the celebrated palace at some other time, we dismounted from our lofty stand and found that a crowd had in the meantime gathered round our ponies. It did not take long to get clear of it and pass through the streets again to the inn, where we breakfasted and performed our ablutions in the best way we could.

The excitement in the street and courtyard was quite extraordinary, after what we had already encountered. The noise and commotion, the scaling of roofs and walls, the incessant attempts of infatuated men to obtain access to our room despite warnings and ignominious expulsions, the cat-like agility of many who clambered over the high wall that enclosed a small courtyard behind our apartment in order to puncture the paper panes of the back window — all this was for a short time amusing and comical enough, but it soon became tiresome, and gave us little hope of being allowed to walk far in the city. The open brick-work in front was literally plastered with human faces, divided and sub-divided by the intervening bricks into countless fragments; but somehow or other there was always a very large proportion of glancing eyes seen through the cross-shaped apertures.

We had taken a letter of introduction with us from a Comprador at Ying-tsze to a general merchant in Moukden, and it was deemed most advisable to send for this man, and make him useful to us either in the way of gathering information from him, or getting him to act as a conductor; for

we were given to understand that he was a personage of some importance in the trading world.

He came, a thorough specimen of the thriving Chinaman, fat, phlegmatic, snuffy, and well garbed in summer clothing, with fan, pipe, and tobacco-pouch. On entering he made a half curtsey, and gave us a nod or two, as did also two rather swaggering friends of his, who proceeded without a moment's delay to handle and examine all our things.



Courtyard Wall.

Our business with him was briefly told. We had come to see Shin Yang—for such we must now designate Moukden, as that name was all but unknown among the people of the towns and villages on our way, and in the city itself it was not recognised, while its other names—Shinking—the 'affluent capital,' which was at one time the title of the present seat of government as well as of the whole Mantchu territory; and Fung-tien-fu—the 'city of the heavenly wind,'—was only understood by a few intelligent Chinese, so that the

famed Tartar capital is now only known by the Mongol or Ming appellation of Shin Yang. We asked was there much to see, and how long would it take us to visit everything? He answered, 'Oh, there was a great deal to see, and at the least it would take us three days to look at everything properly.'

This certainly put us on the tip-toe of expectation, and as the man was civil and obliging, and thought himself rather patronised by our inquisitiveness, it was agreed that we should walk out in the afternoon to begin our inspections with a pilgrimage to the palace. Until then, the tobacco-pouch was constantly appealed to, and in a room besieged by the restless crowd without, clouded by dense fumes of smoke, and covered by our travelling kit strewn about the floor, we chatted away with our oily-skinned guests as well as our meagre stock of Chinese would permit—though oftentimes we wished them far enough when we were made sick at heart by those never-to-be-got-accustomed-to emanations of garlic and onions—those volcanic rumblings presaging a fearful eruption which every well-bred Chinese takes care to display after meals, with the inevitable coughing and spitting that with these people is the loved accompaniment of smoking. We found cause afterwards, when we began to collect and handle the various articles scattered within their range, to lament that the fashion of carrying spittoons did not extend beyond the imperial reception-room at Peking to the circles in which we were obliged to move on our journey.*

The first important question we propounded to the friendly trader, who had forsaken his shop to do us so much service, was concerning the whereabouts of the Mantchu people, and

* Strange it is that Marco Polo should mention this courtly use of a partial remedy for a filthy habit in his day. 'Every man of rank carries with him into the hall of audience, a vessel into which he spits, that he may not soil the floor; and having done so, he replaces the cover, and makes a bow.'

if any were really to be seen in the town ; or if they had become so denationalized, so incorporated with the Chinese element, and swayed by the invincible powers of Chinese civilization as to be unrecognisable in the ever-changing crowds about us.

The novelty, and, perhaps, the boldness of the question seemed to startle and then amuse the Middle Kingdom exotic, for, looking at his interrogators with some surprise, and then with a smile and a grunt of disdainful indifference, he replied in a careless tone, 'The Tartars are cows'—a figurative expression for the extreme of uselessness and stupidity—'there are a few Mantchu merchants, some mandarins, and a small number of soldiers in Shin Yang, but the poor men (a scornful grunt) live away in the wild country there'—giving his head a nod northwards in the direction of Kirin and the Songari valley.

'That is a Mantchu man, at the door,' he said, as he indicated a tall skinny old man with large prominent features, who in light gauze stuff, and a straw hat with a low-rank button, was at that moment striving to obtain a good view of us. The merchant evidently thought him something of a curiosity from the way in which he drew our attention towards this solitary specimen of the almost obliterated race.

By dint of their extraordinary industry, thrifty habits, an unceasing desire to accumulate wealth by any amount of plodding, cunning, or hardship, the Chinaman has wormed himself beyond the Great Wall, built towns and villages, cultivated every rood of land, and is at once the farmer and trader everywhere. He claims the best portion of Mantchuria as his own, and dares even to scandalize the Tartar race in their own capital, though it is barely two centuries since that race filed in long cavalry troops through those gates at Shan-hia-Kwan, and were introduced by an indiscreet Chinese general to the vast empire which they soon conquered and sternly governed. Now, the Chinese seem the

conquerors ; for they have not only obtained possession of the land, and converted it into a region thoroughly Chinese, but they have imposed their language, their habits and customs, and every trait belonging to them on those of the original occupants who chose to mix with them, and ousted out every grim old bannerman who would not condescend to shop-keeping or handling the spade or plough.

There is not the most trifling Mantchu word to designate town, hamlet, mountain, or river, in use among the people now-a-days, and anything that might at all tell of the character and power of the original proprietors is entirely effaced. If the Mantchus obtained possession of the Dragon Throne at Peking partly by force of arms and military prowess, and partly by perfidy, aided by rebellions amongst the Chinese themselves ; and if they compelled the hundreds of millions, over whom they found cause to rule, to alter their dress, wear tails, and, perhaps, smoke tobacco, the people thus subjugated have made ample retaliation by wiping out every trace of their invaders in their own country, and leaving the existence of the usurpers all but traditionary in the metropolis where, two hundred years ago, they held their court, and where one of their kings boldly vowed revenge for seven great grievances that he imagined had been brought on him by the Chinese Emperor.

Nothing prevents the invasion of the Corea by these wonderful Chinese, but the high palisade that keeps them within the limits of Mantchuria ; for if once they managed to get a footing in that country the Coreans would suffer the same fate as the Mantchus, and there is no telling where the sons of Ham would finally stop in their bloodless aggrandizement and territorial acquisitiveness. But the merchant told us that the Chinese are never allowed to pass beyond this palisade, though the Coreans are permitted to enter Tartary by one gate—the Fung-whang—with their merchandise thrice a year.

Having rested ourselves sufficiently, it was considered

best to delay no longer in proceeding to the palace, as it would require much time to go through all the rooms, and we must be back by sun-down. So the three Chinese led the way and we followed; but the police tried very hard to dissuade them from going beyond the inn gate, until we interposed, and the merchant finding himself thus supported, pushed on. The sun was very warm, the crowd half-frantic and pressing in upon us closely, and almost heedless of the tremendous whacks dealt amongst them by the ugly whips; so that it was out of our power to see anything except dust and sky. Half smothered, we left the principal street and turned down a half-deserted sort of lane with a chain across as a barrier. While this was being unfastened, we saw before us an old wooden gateway, and a portion of a paved courtyard. This was the palace entrance, and in a few seconds more we would be within the shelter of its doors. Sad delusion! for as we were congratulating ourselves, a betattered soldier rushed out from a half-ruinous guard-house on the right, and with a piece of string began to tie the two half-leaves together to prevent our admission. He had a difficult task, and I much doubt if he could have succeeded—for the whole fabric looked as if it would tumble down upon him, when about half-a-dozen officers came out in procession, and as soon as they saw us they all, with one exception, retired precipitately again.

This exception was a middle-rank military man—a good-looking fellow with red cheeks and a European face, who stepped forward to speak with the puzzled friend of ours, while a few dirty soldiers grouped behind him. There was an animated conversation carried on for a brief space, and we remarked that our friend was nothing backwards in urging our claim to be allowed within the palace. The official said we could not go unless we were prepared to pay homage—do the *Ko-tau*—before a portrait of the emperor in one of the halls. To this we did not give any very decided answer;

all we cared about was seeing the courtyard, and perhaps we might make our obeisance to his Majesty afterwards. This did not suit him, and our party of guides, seemingly resolute on going in, alarmed the magistrate, who took us into the guard-room, where, seated on the dirty kang, with a lot of bows and arrows in front of us, he reasoned civilly enough with the tradesman; and not without effect, for we were informed, at last, that it would be necessary to apply to the Mayor or Prefect, whose yamuns we had passed on the way, before we could be favoured with admission.

There was no alternative but to do so, or leave Shin Yang without seeing this imperial residence, and as we were not in quite presentable trim for a visit to either of these great worthies, and had but little desire to make their acquaintance, we gave up our pursuit, satisfied that there was not much to attract us, after all.

In returning, and but a short distance from the shaky gate, we saw a long court branching off to one side, at the top of which was an octagonal peristyled building of wood, with a heavy roof of yellow tiles, and dragons twining around the pillars. Though very much gone to decay, there was yet enough left to show that it must have been an elegant building of its kind about a century since. In two rows on each side of the edifice were ten smaller structures built in the same style. The large one, we were informed, was the Imperial reception room, and the others were erected for the Emperor Shun-chi's brothers. This emperor, who is regarded as the first of the dynasty, held his court here about 220 years ago, but when he had made secure his hold upon the great dnpire of China, he removed to Peking, since which time this regal dwelling has not been occupied for any lengthened period by his successors, and it has been only used by some princes of the yellow girdle who have no great claim to higher consideration.

The sum of two thousand dollars is granted annually to

keep the place in repair, but, said our informant—a Shanghai Comprador at Ying-tsze—with a knowing look, 'all that dollar go big mandarin ; he think it all same cumshaw (present or gift),' certainly a mild way of looking at such a fraudulent misappropriation of public money.

We saw nothing anywhere to confirm, or at all substantiate the belief so popular in some of the Chinese communities, that the Emperor of China remits every year such sums as he may be able to collect in Peking to Shin Yang, there to be kept for emergencies ; and doubtless the report is without foundation.

The merchant seemed greatly chagrined at the uncourteous reception we had received from the dignitaries, and could not satisfy himself why, when respectable Chinese were given admission to the palace at any time during the day, two strangers who had travelled so far, and provided themselves with passports too, should not be shown every civility. Ignorant man! he little knew that the only obstructions Europeans generally have thrown in their way in his country are the work of officials, and that the safest course to adopt when wandering through the land is to avoid them and their myrmidons whenever practicable. But he tried to compensate us for our disappointment by leading the way through several streets — all better than any of those we have waded through in Peking—and provided with good shops; though the crush and crash were so great, the heat and the dust so suffocating, and the policemen's whips so busy, that the whole party of us gladly turned towards the inn.

We were anxious to have purchased some little *souvenir* of our visit, and saw some shops where trifles, such as we fancied, were sold; but to have entered them was to threaten or subject the proprietors to actual ruin, for the crowd would have swept everything before them in their headlong madness. We reached our room looking like millers or dustmen, and our perspiring companions would have been all the better for

a sousing under a pump. This was the termination of the promised three days' sight-seeing, and we could not but feel a little mortified, though we had much to be thankful for, and could find no great cause for complaint.

So we tried to put on the best face we could, and to console ourselves by a half-European, half-Chinese dinner done in Ma-foo's best style. Thanks to the diffusion of Western civilization and Western luxuries, we could not only muster a Frankfort sausage, a tin of questionable hotch-potch, but also, O ye erratic epicures who cannot travel fifty miles unless certain that your dinner bill of fare includes the choicest delicacies! *Pâté de Foie gras d'Oie* preserved to perfection.

Never had Moukden received such an importation, and great was the excitement and consternation elicited among our friends and spectators when one tin-canister after another suffered a hurried autopsy, and our meal began; but their wonder reached its culminating point when the first bottle of Schweppe's soda water was opened with a bang that made them jump and change countenance, and the resuscitating draught was quaffed off. How they stared and gaped to see what effect the explosive compound would produce on the grateful imbiber! And how they struggled and fought, old with young, mandarin with manure-gatherer, when the empty bottle — a perfect marvel to them, and which an observant patriarch aptly, and without hesitation, christened a *chang suay*, or 'water-gun' — was thrown beyond the doorway!

Our three friends remained with us until a late hour, endeavouring to conceal, under a badly-assumed *insouciance*, the intense surprise our acts caused them. At last they left, and the door was barred inside to keep out the restless people whom we had robbed of their sleep. Before we lay down on the hard bed-place, however, we had to frighten away some half-dozen wretches who had climbed walls and performed wondrous feats of agility in getting to the window

immediately above our dormitory, and riddling its oiled paper panes with their fingers.

Sometime towards the morning we awoke shivering with cold; for as the nights nearer the gulf had been so oppressively sultry and unpleasant that a Chinese suit of the thinnest cotton was the only covering that could be tolerated when we left Ying-tsze, no blanket or rug formed a portion of our necessaries on starting; and now we were obliged to get up, dress in the few articles of wardrobe we possessed, and walk about the room smartly to keep up a comfortable degree of warmth. The difference in temperature between Shin Yang and the new foreign settlement, or Tien-tsin, at this season of the year was truly astounding, and quite accounted for the healthy fresh complexions and hardy-looking men we had noticed during the day. The clear atmosphere; the very warm, but never prostrating sun — the delightfully cool nights, and the general salubrity of Moukden, must render it a most delectable refuge for those unfortunate countrymen of ours, who come to extend the commerce of Britain by dwelling on the banks of the Liau Hô, and fidget body and mind in the prosecution of trade.

Next day we were somewhat undecided how to spend the time, because the annoyance and hubbub continually attendant on our moving out of doors made us averse to seek the streets, and the attentive merchant, who had taken up his abode with us again at an early hour, did not offer much encouragement, or induce us to prolong our stay. At first, we thought that it might be possible to ride seventy or eighty miles farther to visit the graves or tombs of the Mantchu princes, termed *Yoong ling*, or 'Tombs which ought never to perish,' and which are three, built on mountains to the north-west of Shin Yang; but as our friend could give us no information about them, or even indicate the way to the town near which they are situated; and as there was every probability of our being prevented from seeing them, if we suc-

ceeded in reaching the locality, by some jealous, narrow-minded, buttoned men, the idea was given up.

The next project was to send our ponies back to the British settlement by road, and hire boats at the Huin Hô in order to sail down the Liau, and, as this would offend none of the authorities, it was agreed upon. The Chinaman civilly sent one of his shopmen to engage the boats, but he soon came back with the unwelcome tidings that there was a breeze blowing, and the river was so disturbed that no *San-pans* or *tschwans* could venture on it. So, foiled in all our attempts, there was nothing for us but to return as we came.

In the forenoon, an artist, whom the merchant recommended, was sent for, with a request to bring some specimens of his handiwork in drawing, as we were bent on purchasing some *memento* of the Mantchu metropolis. He came—a Chinaman, of course—and brought several books for which he demanded extravagant prices, and stuck to his demands as tenaciously as if these fantastic daubs had been of far more value to us than to his countrymen. One curious sketch-book, made up of odds and ends, was at last bought by me for a sum I should be almost afraid to name when showing the work to my western friends, and I have no doubt the painter would gladly have welcomed the presence of strangers more frequently, did they all pay him as handsomely for his somewhat clever etchings.

It was with some regret that we mounted into our saddles again in the afternoon, and bidding the amicable fellow who had sacrificed so much time, and exposed himself to such a mobbing on our behalf, a long good-bye, turned our backs to the north, and to the only respectable city we had seen in China.

We ardently wished to penetrate far beyond its walls, and into that unknown country of which Father Du Halde, recounting Verbiest's travels, says: 'Beyond Liautoong the road is difficult; the hills are covered on the east side with huge oaks and forests uncut for ages past. All the country is like

a wilderness. You see nothing around but hills, vales, and dens of bears, tigers, and other savage beasts; scarce a house, but some pitiful huts by the sides of rivers and torrents.' Our passports offered us aid; but time was getting scarce, and the great uncertainty of finding our way again to Tien-tsin prevailed, and debarred us from the attempt. The same bevy of policemen, headed by the little man on the donkey, were in waiting, and almost the same performance was enacted as on our arrival.

When we got beyond the town, a solitary horseman followed us; but he, too, left when we had embarked on the ferry-boat at the Huin Hô; and, after a lovely evening's ride almost alone on the road, we slept for the night in a good inn, satisfied with our visit to Moukden; which visit we were never again to repeat.

Favoured by fine weather, we made a rapid journey downwards, and without any particular incident until we got near Newchwang, when, on a quiet road, we beheld a most unwonted sight—a long string of carts, a large escort, and a tall figure in a blue jacket and white trowsers, making long strides to keep pace with quick-stepping mules, in a quite un-Chinese fashion. As they neared us, we discovered the stalking gentleman to be a British tar, and when alongside, found Lord John Hay, R.N., and two officers of his ship, doubled up in a tailoring posture, and looking everything but comfortable in their jolting conveyance. The 'Odin' had arrived at the Ying-tsze anchorage a day or two after we departed, and Lord John hearing of our project, got passports, carts, conductors, cutlasses, and two live mandarins to do them the honours in every town and halting-place on their way, and to overtake our unostentatious little party. It was pleasant once more to see English faces and to hear English voices in such an unexpected situation; and though we had but little incentive in the shape of novelty to hold out to them in the outlandish city they were bound for, there was nothing but

the conduct of the magistrates towards us that could discourage them in our account.

Anticipating every assistance, however, from the spectacled white and red buttons they had brought with them to exhibit the *dragons* of Moukden, they felt confident of seeing the interior of the palace, and many other things we had not been able to achieve.

But alas for the confiding nature of Britons, and the deceit of mercenary mandarins! When they returned to the settlement some six days afterwards, they had a very indifferent tale to tell. The small officials had fleeced, or rather, in the pigeon-English vernacular, 'squeezed,' them whenever they got the least chance, and they had carried them on to Shin Yang, and there decamped; leaving the unlucky men to grope about the city without a guide, thwarted by the police when they assayed to get on the wall, and altogether ignorant of the situation of the palace.

At Newchwang the people were as uncivil and rude as ever, but we got through all right, and after journeying at the rate of fifty-five miles a day, on those trusty ponies of ours, we were safely housed among Europeans, grasshoppers and larks, and in full receipt of the uncongenial odours that hang about that putrescent cesspool, Ying-tsze.

Our steeds had actually improved in performing what must have been well nigh seven hundred miles over a rough country, at nothing less of an average than forty miles a day, and on such miserable fare, too, as bran and chopped straw; so that it was not to be wondered at that they should realise more at Ying-tsze than they cost at Tien-tsin. We felt it a little trying to part with such hardy servants, on whose gaunt frames we had passed some long weary days; but there was no alternative. Mafoo, a thorough citizen of the world, did not care about going back to Tien-tsin again, so took service with one of the newly-settled merchants, stronger than ever in his predilections for Samshu.

The early sailing of the 'Odin' for the mouth of the Peiho gave us an excellent and fortuitous opportunity of returning to our garrison and duty again; and through the courtesy of Lord John Hay, and the sailorly kindness of the ward-room officers, we were favoured with a passage across the Gulf, and the best cheer the mess could afford.

The weather was so delightful and the yellow waters so tranquil that it was considered but little out of the ship's course to touch at the termination of the Great Wall, where it abuts on the sea. Strange sensations were recalled when the shore was sighted, and the Scottish-like mountains stood there, grand in their heavenward ruggedness, but divested of the savage majesty which so ennobles the Grampians, by that tremendous crowning effort of human labour and endurance seen in lines of masonry and fearless towers, binding and manacling the riotous peaks, until nature seems to succumb to the power and perseverance of man; for the giant cliffs sink into insignificance, as the eye courses for miles, and without interruption, along their loftiest borders, and finds the mammoth barrier exultingly overleap them all.

As we drew closer to the land, the quiet road along which we had passed many days before, full of uncertainty and hope, became visible; the old battlemented towers stood along its margin, like antiquated men-at-arms, frowning seawards; and the yellow sand, the green millet, and shreds of inhabited land were all that met the searching gaze. It was necessary, for several reasons, to anchor at some distance from the shore; so we had a long pull to reach the wall, which, as it finishes its prolonged march in a junction with the eastern sea, resembles very much some old Rhenish castle. Imagine our astonishment to find the brickwork face of its foundation daubed with white paint in large letters, and in German, testifying that the Prussian Frigate 'Arcona' had visited this place on the 16th of July, four days after our departure from Shan-hai-kwan. However remarkable it may

have been for one of the few Prussian war-ships to stray so far from Fatherland, it certainly did not add much to the renown of the *Kaiser*, whose title was stumped up in the lonely placard, or of those who had indulged in this reprehensible habit, and we were pleased to observe that no traces could be found of any such silly vanity in our countrymen, though many ships had touched here belonging to Britain, since 1841.

What struck everybody was the great solidity of the wall, standing as it does on a low rocky promontory, and the little damage time has been able to inflict upon it in two thousand years.

We walked some distance along its parapet, and with no small emotion singled out that tower-mounted peak, then becoming gradually imperceptible in the approaching dusk of evening—where, on that fearful 12th of July, I had begun my hard day's struggle for life with the furious sun, and behind which, in some of the never-to-be-sought chasms, lay our thermometer and aneroid.

A number of poor villagers came to look at the strangers, and they were no ways backward in lending themselves to carry away a few of the splendid, but rather cumbersome bricks, as trophies of the call we had made:—trophies which, I fear, were not carried many thousand miles before they were discarded.

The lateness of the hour did not admit of our walking so far as Shan-hai-kwan, so content with having *done* the ten thousand li barrier a second time, we sought the ship. In three days more we were navigating the perplexing links of the Peiho, and had launched into the furnace-heat and foulness of Tien-tsin; where, during our absence, sickness had been playing havoc among the troops, and had been changing some of the bronzed faces of friends and brother officers into yellow and pale physiognomies, very unlike their home hue.

Our successful journey had been quite a feat, and our safe arrival within the walls of a British garrison town again, without having lost by stealth the smallest article of the equipment we had started with, redounded greatly to the credit of the Chinese; indeed everything conspired to leave upon our minds a delightful recollection of our travel through this truly wonderful country.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY BEYOND PEKING, TO THE COAL-MINES.

THE list of my school-day books, besides the other varied accounts of travel by land and sea, penned by writers and travellers of near and remote ages, all quoted the then, to me, wondrously curious narrative of the unfortunate Venetian, Marco Polo; and though many years have passed away since I admiringly lingered over the perusal of his seemingly fabulous recital of the extent and peculiarities of the strange land in which he had so long been a dweller, yet, by oft-repeated readings and a natural taste for remarkable tales, every page left its due impression on a mind fully awakened in after-years to the truth of what the honest Polo had vouched for, when on a visit to the land of Sinim; and more especially to the city of Cambalu, the abode of the Grand Khan.

The long strings of tawny funereal-paced camels, begrimed with the carbonaceous loads they bore with such melancholy-looking fortitude, conducted by sooty Sinensians through the wide dusty streets of Peking; the sonorous tinkling of the heavy brass bells suspended to the lower part of their acutely bent-up necks, and the frequent shrill discordant scream of anger or fatigue emitted by these slow but patient creatures, told of the neighbourhood of coal, and the statement made by the *protégé* of Kublai Khan, was immediately recalled to my memory.

'Throughout the whole province of Cathay, there are a kind

of black stones cut from the mountains in veins, which burn like logs. They maintain the fire better than wood. If you put them on in the evening they will preserve it the whole night, and will be found burning in the morning.'

So a strong desire to visit the source of this mineral wealth, excited by last year's stay at Peking, mainly prompted me to travel from Tien-tsin to the capital in the fiery heat of August 1861, and to undergo the pleasant hardships of a river trip of six days' duration. After revisiting the various sights of the great metropolis, and experiencing the usual amount of fatigue in threading the long, wide, hovel-margined streets, to get a peep at the external walls of some Imperial building—like all the others, in a state of uninterrupted decay; or to obtain the dusty scrutiny of a neglected park or garden through the mouldering bars of a tumble-down gate, I determined that a trip to the hills should be had recourse to, in order to indulge my desire to examine the coal mines beyond Peking, as well as to get rid of the feeling of dreariness and desolation that made itself evident after two days' rambling through the vast labyrinths on every side, notwithstanding the kind attentions of Her Majesty's representative, and the almost regal splendour and hospitality to be found in the ambassadorial residence of Liang-koong-fu.

So on a lovely morning, and before the sun had begun to fulfil his broiling functions, a small party of us mounted a somewhat disreputable-looking stud of mules in the courtyard of our host. Accommodating the inferior end of our spinal columns, and twisting our legs into the intricacies of rickety wooden saddles, we were soon in motion and threading the busy streets in the vicinity of the Chinese city. We passed through a narrow dirty lane, not far from the middle wall, one side of which was lined by a collection of mouldy old houses or dens and squalid occupants.

'There,' said our guide, pointing to one more venerable and repulsive than the others, 'is the inn for tribute bearers in

general, and the Coreans in particular, when these half savages come to Peking to settle accounts with the Son of Heaven, and do the homage of a tributary people.'

As I almost loathingly cast my eyes over its mean exterior, and the vilely odorous neighbourhood in which it is situated, I was horrified when told that 'in this inn for tribute bearers, one of our Ambassadors, with his suite, was obliged to live during his stay and attendance on the haughty court;' but now, within five hundred yards of the place, the British ensign flies over the princely residence of another minister, who, I hope, is viewed in a very different light to that of a tribute bearer by the functionaries who surround the Dragon Throne.

An hour's ride carries us from the stenches and puddles of the uncomfortable streets to the open country. Fine roads, dry and level, shaded by old trees, and skirted by neat-looking villages embosomed in leafy solitude, remind me of some of the pleasantest nooks in England, and certainly give one a favorable impression of the rural beauty that encircles the City of the Plain. Fantastic temples covering great spaces of ground, and in good repair, are here and there exchanged for a tall ridge-ribbed pagoda, or ruinous structures, the yellow-tiled roofs of which, gaping and rent and tottering on walls or pillars, seem to be the remains of former imperial magnificence, and, like everything else within the city, indicate a state of prosperity and wealth gone by, a state very unlike the present.

About 20 lí from Peking, in a south-west direction, we leave the cultivated country behind us, and emerge on an open sandy plain, quite devoid of interest and of life; for, until we reach Loo-gu-chow, five lí a-head, we only meet with a petty cavalry mandarin, escorted by two tatterdemalions on gaunt semi-domesticated ponies.

Loo-gu-chow, standing on the left bank of a tolerably wide river, the Huin Hô, is a walled town of a very antiquated

type, and apparently in a state of collapse, despite the spasmodic efforts half-a-dozen workmen were making to improve the appearance of one of the hemiplegic wall towers by whitewash—possibly to deceive the eye of some corrupt sub-inspector of Celestial fortifications. The wall, once strong and high, was in many places parapet-less, and, with the ditch, was rapidly hiding itself under high banks of drift sand that had scaled to the top of the north side.

Here we breakfasted; but as neither the hostel nor mine host could gain any credit by a description of the strong-smelling compounds set before us in a thoroughly characteristic manner, in a room which, we could safely say, was never troubled by the profane touch of a brush or invaded by the faintest trace of pure air, we need not recommend the place to any future traveller; more especially as the charges made far exceeded the value of our entertainment.

Nowhere in China have we seen a finer stone bridge than that which spans the rusty-coloured mud-laden river close to the town, built, as it is, in the most substantial manner, and yet with an elegance of outline and justness of proportion quite surprising to those who fancy that these structures are only to be found in perfection in Western countries.

I can specially commend this *pons elegans* to the favorable consideration of wandering artists, and think that, with the two or three peristyled buildings containing the mythical sea-horse bearing Fohi's stone tablets, at one extremity of the bridge, the wide and graceful expanse of the foot and carriage ways, and the handsome stone parapet surmounted by no less than 280 tutelary lions, a worthy and, perhaps, unique picture would be given of this species of architecture, which is certainly curious.

The left bank of the Huin Hô, which flows in a winding manner from the western mountains and in a south-easterly direction, is faced and well built, up to a height of twelve or fourteen feet, for several miles, with blocks of granite, with

the object, apparently, of preventing its overflow, and submerging the country in the direction of Peking.

On the right bank, and away beyond to the undulating ground at the foot of the hills, the land is low and sandy; and as we approached Wool-an-gan, a village 43 lí from Peking, we found it becoming thickly covered with water-worn pebbles and boulders — the *débris* carried from the mountains by the river, the bed of which had now become much more limited and defined.

About mid-day the foot of the hills is reached, and in the village of Le-end-tswang we avail ourselves of the cordial hospitality offered by the chief priest of the clean, tidy temple of Foong-foo-tsza. We are near the coal mines; for in the distance, passing along a road pretty well cleared of stones, we can see the sombre 'ships of the desert,' stalking in solemn array in single files, preceded or followed by sturdy, quick-stepping ponies laden, like the camels, with the 'black stones from the mountains,' which are stowed in bags, and fastened on serviceable pack saddles instead of pads. In answer to our enquiries, the priests inform us that the largest *mae-shan* or coal hill, is fifty lí off, but that a small one is now before us, and within six lí; so, as quickly as we can lodge our mules in the airy stables maintained for the accommodation of equestrians, we set out for the long-desired survey.

Everywhere we meet with the utmost civility, though the people were moved by the most unmistakeable symptoms of curiosity, oftentimes, indeed, unmitigated by the filmiest polish of civilization; yet their remarks and their conduct were in every respect inoffensive, and they showed themselves always ready to oblige us when the fear, inspired by the *ta hoosas* or great beards, as they called us, had passed away. In the village, we were surprised to find the houses slated after the European fashion, and an abundance of slate of a bluish-yellow tinge, with as perfect a cleavage as the best

Welsh. Though the principal use to which the rock is put is as roofing: yet large square slabs are found in readiness to serve as tables, or as the material for enclosing the small plots of ground in front of every house, wherein the vegetables required for family use are preserved from the inroads of dogs or pigs.

As we begin to ascend the low rounded hills which contain the coal we find that their structure is essentially slaty; large masses of the finest slate rock, torn and rifted here and there, as if nature had purposely split up and laid bare this great deposit of compact stratified rock for the special use of man, who, however, is slow to avail himself of the opportunity; as in no other village did we see this most useful article pressed into the list of necessaries required for domestic purposes, though the labour entailed would have been insignificant.

A narrow gorge leads from the road in a tortuous manner up the sides of the hills; and where it presents difficulties in the way of ascent, steps of mica-slate or gneiss are made to facilitate the transport of baskets of coal from above, by men and boys. A mountain stream affords water to the clusters of mean cottages grouped along the narrow track, and smutty men are removing the dust accumulated during the day at a pool which has been dammed up in its course.

The smooth round surface of the higher hills is thinly covered with a peculiar variety of oak—a dwarfish scrubby tree of little beauty—yet affording an agreeable contrast to the sterile grey mountains of granite beyond, which throw up their jagged fantastic margins to the clouds in an uninterrupted line, far as the eye can reach.

The presence of coal in the rocky regions we are now traversing is made more manifest by the abundance of clay slate strewing the track, in which is thickly disseminated fragments of iron stone; while thin streaks of coaly matter are observable wherever the road has been cut deeply through

the shoulder of a bank. At length, after half-an-hour's toiling upwards, we arrive at a coal yard. Unluckily we are too late, for the workmen are preparing to go home for the day, and the small collections of coal, heaped up in several places, are being carefully streaked or dribbled over with whitewash, to mark whether any one may attempt to disturb or borrow from the lots during the night—a practice which, if we remember aright, is in vogue in our own coal depôts. We enquire for the pit, and are conducted to a little shed, built over a small perforation in the ground, which seems to us little larger than a rabbit-burrow, and with wooden bars or steps fixed in the earth for the purpose of ascent or descent on the rather steep slope which leads into Cimmerian obscurity below. We notify that we are anxious to go down, but no volunteer will accompany us. We are referred to the proprietor of a mine, a long way higher up; so we have no alternative but to withdraw, after remarking that the only means of ventilation consists in the use of a small primitive-looking fanner driven by one man.

We were more fortunate at the other establishment; for, after grappling with the difficulties of the way, we find that, though rather late, the master civilly allows one of his men to show us the mouth of the pit, which is a new one, and built over, like the one below, by a small shed in which a large coal fire is kept burning, probably to cause a draught towards the interior excavation, and thus aid in ventilating the work, for we can see nothing of fanners here. We desire to penetrate to its hidden recesses, but the Chinese say it is very unpleasant, because it is steep, wet, and dirty. These objections we care nothing for; and, at last, the guide puts on his head a closely-fitting old cap, over which he slips the string of a lamp—the very fac-simile of those used in going up and down pits at home—then puts on a suit of coaly clothes, and when ready to go below is the exact picture of a Lancashire or Newcastle miner. We pull off cap, coat, and

braces, and turning our faces towards the steps, as if about to climb or descend a ladder, we stoop very low in order to enter the constricted circular opening, which leads to impenetrable darkness and unknown depths.

The guide goes first, and is very fidgetty, as he looks upwards and finds us making a very clumsy beginning, clinging to the rude wooden bars, which are fixed, like the rounds of a ladder, in the damp ground. His cautions are numerous, and we are soon able to avail ourselves of his directions and stride slowly backwards and downwards into the realms below, like an earthworm, with the faint glimmer of the lamp barely revealing the features of the narrow passage we are creeping through. At an angle of about 45°, or even less, this hole is drilled through a thick stratum of what seems to be mica-schist, loose and soft in texture, and necessitating the *timbering* of the roof with rude frames of the stunted, but apparently durable oak, to prevent its falling in. Every fourteen or fifteen feet of this shaft, we calculated, possessed a gradual turn or twist, so that this highly inclined subterranean way worms its road down through the rock in a spiral direction. Passing through the beds of softer rocks, which allow the water to permeate their substance, and drip in icy globules on our heads and on the floor of the shaft, we come to a very deep layer of what must be a blue compact limestone, which must have cost a vast amount of labour and patience to penetrate, and which the guide calls bad rock. Still downwards, until we have counted a hundred and twenty long strides, and until our heads are becoming stupid, and our arms and legs well tired with the dark uncertain path and the irregular way in which the steps are fixed.

When we have half repented of our anxiety to explore a Chinese coal-pit, and have fully realised the danger that might result did we lose our hold, or did some of those huge blocks of hard stone, sustained overhead by such slender props, happen to fall in, we are glad to find the lamp and its

bearer brought to a standstill, and to hear the voice of the gnome calling to us to stop and look. We have reached a gallery, narrow and wet, running along the surface of the coal, which some excavators have been digging up from the floor. We go to the end, which is about twenty feet from the shaft; and then the *cicerone* telling us that this is not a good place for coal, beckons us to follow him back to the shaft, where he removes a small trap-door from another passage—which door, he tells us, is to divert the air from one gallery to another—and we once more commence a march downwards for thirty strides, until we are again brought to a halt by a series of branching galleries running to the right and left, which are the seat of more active operations. The place is now lonely and still, however, for the people have gone home, with the exception of one boy, whose twinkling lamp comes across us quite unexpectedly at a turn of the passage. He is also leaving, but he carries with him, or rather drags behind him, the proceeds of his mining, in a long shallow basket mounted on two wooden skids. This truck is painfully and laboriously dragged up the circling foramen, until it gets to the surface, by means of a rope band passed over the shoulder and allowed to play between the legs, while the bearer is puffing and blowing with the light draught of about twenty-five pounds of coal behind him.

Remarking that, though no means of ventilation exists, the pit nevertheless feels cool, and the air is not unpleasant; the man, who is very intelligent and communicative, informs us that it is a new pit; but that in the old pits accidents are frequent from the entrance of *bad wind*, the want of drainage, and the giving way of the roof; and that when this happens, the work is deserted, and an opening is made in fresh ground.

Having stretched our backs in the somewhat lofty passage, and finding myself perfectly satisfied with what I had seen of the very imperfect way in which the black stones are procured

from the mountains, — but which has probably not been improved since the days when Polo looked upon their use as something marvellous, we retrace our steps, and after a long toil emerge once again to the fast-fading daylight.

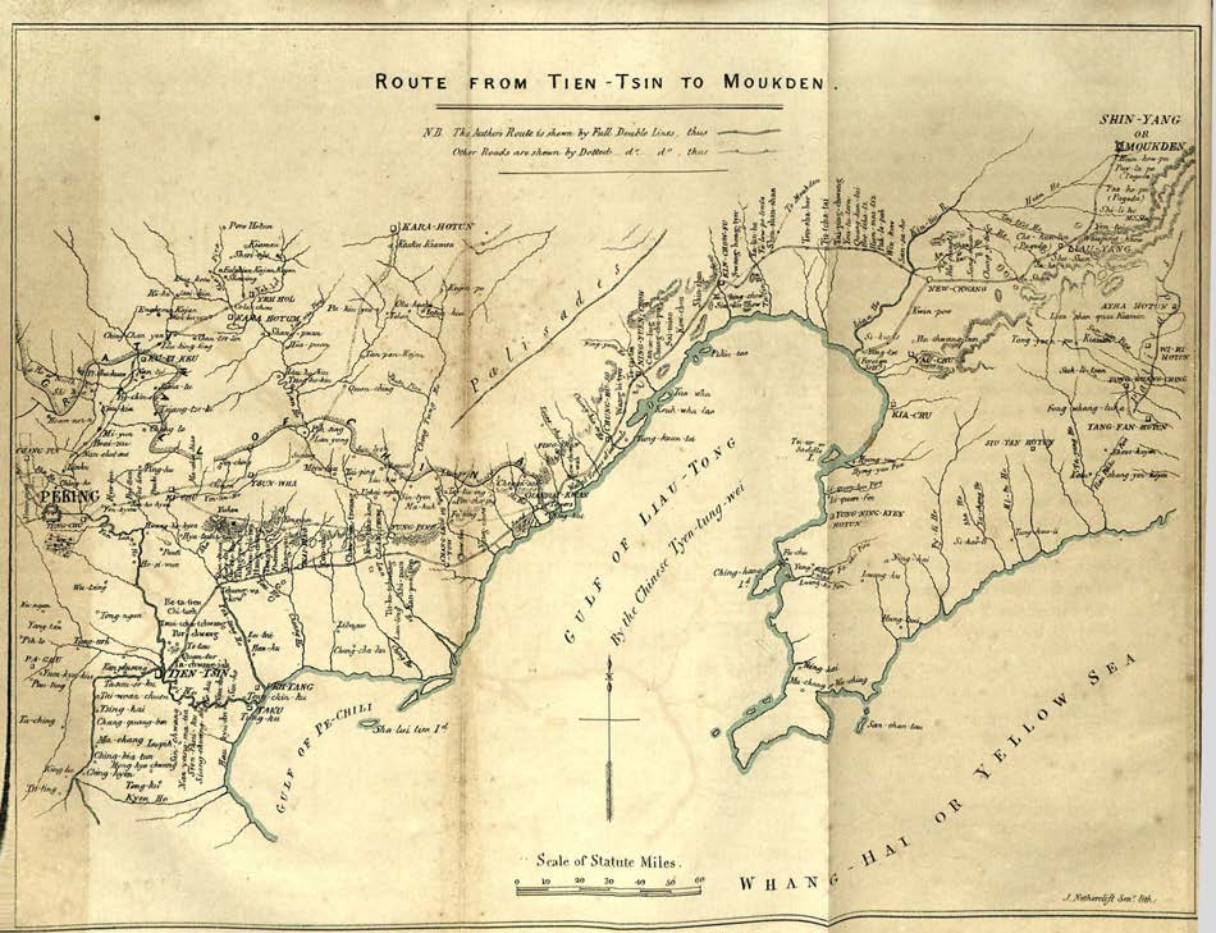
I could not leave the place, however, without asking why our Chinese friends did not quarry the coarse stony anthracite from the side of the hill, instead of beginning on its apex, and burrowing through beds and strata of tough unmanageable rocks, from the bowels of which they are obliged to carry up the sought-for treasure, without the means of supplying fresh air, or draining off the water that quickly accumulates in troublesome quantity. But they grinned, and did not care about answering such impertinent interrogations, which had for their object only puzzling surmises and unfeasible propositions, quite incompatible with the stereotyped notions and rules of Chinese antiquity.

It was dusk when we reached our temple, where hunger made us right willing to appease its demands on savoury viands strongly redolent of pork fat.

The priests did their best to furnish amusement, and more especially one little man, who appeared to be deemed a proficient on the flute: for aught I know his solos extended far into the night, as I soon went to sleep, and only awoke when warned that it was high time to start for Peking.

ROUTE FROM TIEN-TSIN TO MOUKDEN.

N.B. The Authors Route is shewn by Full Double Lines, thus
Other Roads are shewn by Dotted &c. &c. thus



J. Netherclift Sen.t lith.

London. Hurst & Blackett, 13, Great Marlborough St. 1863.

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LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE

00088635

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 05 October, 2018